

BLACKS in UNITED STATES HISTORY

Robert Ivanov



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in
UNITED STATES
HISTORY**



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INTRODUCTION

The United States of America is the pet child of history. A diversity of historical, geographic, and economic factors allowed it to develop under exceptionally favorable circumstances. In a comparatively short period, the United States has made tremendous advances in material production. Today, it is a country of industrial giants, huge cities, excellent roads, and highly productive farms.

The US economy has developed at rates unknown to any other country before. These exceptionally rapid rates of development were helped along by great natural resources which provided everything necessary for progress in industry and agriculture. Another important factor was a constant stream of the most energetic part of the population from European and other countries into the United States. The Americans are the only great nation in world history to be formed by the mass immigration of millions of people.

One other important point is the USA's especially advantageous strategic position, which allowed it over the greater part of its history not to spend sizeable sums on the maintenance of an expensive standing army.

In the course of its 200-year history, the United States went through two revolutions—the War for Independence, 1775-1783, and the Civil War, 1861-1865. These revolutions predetermined the rapid advances in socio-economic and socio-political life and gave the country's development a powerful impetus.

The First and Second World Wars left a horrible mark on man's history. Enormous loss of life and the destruction of tremendous material values—such was the terrible price of those wars for the countries which took part in them. The United States was the only country in the world which got rich off the wars on a fantastic scale. Both world wars

helped change the alignment of forces in the capitalist world and strengthened the US position.

The history of the United States is convincing confirmation of a well-known Marxist truth: revolutions are the locomotives of history. The second American revolution, the Civil War of 1861-1865, provided an especially powerful accelerating force on the country's development. Frederick Engels, one of the founders of Marxism, wrote in 1864: "As soon as the slavery—that greatest of obstacles to the political and social development of the United States—has been smashed, the country will experience a boom that will very soon assure it an altogether different place in the history of the world."¹

Engels' foresight came completely true. After the Civil War ended, the US economic development picked up such rapid pace that by 1894 the US was first in the world in output of industrial production and has held onto that position ever since.

The United States of America has achieved the greatest successes in economic development for the entire period that the capitalist formation has existed. It is illustrative, too, that in the world's most advanced capitalist country all the social, economic, moral, and political evils of the capitalist social system become especially apparent.

The severe problems confronting the United States today are highly complex and, in certain cases, insoluble.

The rapid development of productive forces gave rise to very serious problems in the area of production relations. Despite all the special "anti-crisis measures" taken by the powerful state-monopoly complex, the nature of the development of the US "superheated" economy is reminiscent of the curve of a sick person's temperature taken during severe bouts of fever. Crisis falls in production follow one after another.

The scientific and technological revolution is furthering the rapid development of production. At the same time, in the capitalist world it is leading to some quite serious social conflicts, giving rise, in particular, to widespread unemployment. The prediction of Norbert Wiener, one of the creators of cybernetics, is coming true. He asserted that technical progress will cause such great unemployment that the Great Depression of 1930 will seem like a joke next to it.

Under the weight of terrible overloads tied to the arms race and owing to important occurrences in the capitalist world's

economic development, the US financial system is running up against serious problems.

The struggle against environmental pollution, highly complex problems of mass urbanization, the growth of crime and drug addiction—this is just the beginning of the list of problems which modern American society is encountering.

Some of these problems have arisen relatively recently, others, among them the problem of black Americans, are deep seated. The racial problem is very acute, since the US is the only large capitalist country with such a numerous colored population, numbering some 50 million (about 30 million of whom are Negroes).

The United States emerged in the course of the revolutionary war for independence by England's 13 North American colonies. V. I. Lenin gave a high rating to the progressive, revolutionary meaning of this war. "The history of modern, civilised America," he wrote, "opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few compared to the vast number of wars of conquest."²

The main issue of the War for Independence was the struggle to do away with the colonial dependence of England's North American provinces and to gain state independence. The Negro question also played an important part in the struggle for independence, since black Americans constituted a significant part of the country's population and slavery was one of the rebel colonies' economic bases. In this regard, any solution to the Negro problem was to determine the entire future development of the young independent country.

The war ended with the victory of the rebel colonies. This was one of the most important revolutionary events in world history and one whose impact was spread far beyond the bounds of the Western Hemisphere.

All the same, the revolution was clearly of a limited nature, evident first of all in the fact that slave ownership as an economic system was preserved in all the southern states. It was furthermore given a new and powerful economic stimulus to its development. The bourgeoisie convincingly demonstrated its class selfishness in the course of the War for Independence: slavery was done away with in the northern states, where it was economically unprofitable. In the southern states, this most shameful system of human exploitation began to develop rapidly right after the Revolutionary War.

It took four years of the bloodiest and most grievous war in US history, the Civil War of 1861-1865, to put an end at last to slavery. It should be remembered here that, as far as the bourgeoisie was concerned, the abolition of slave ownership was a forced measure. It was only under pressure from black Americans, radical Republicans, workers, and farmers who were determined to abolish slavery and because the war demanded it that the bourgeoisie of the North agreed to do so.

Slavery was abolished by revolutionary, not constitutional, means. Karl Marx emphasized that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was "the most important document in American history ... tantamount to the tearing up of the old American Constitution".³

The slaves were granted personal freedom, but they received neither land, nor civil or political rights. In this way, the economic, civic, and legal basis was created for turning the former slaves into croppers with no rights who, in conditions of servitude, worked the cotton plantations in the southern states. As V. I. Lenin wrote, "having 'freed' the Negroes, it [the bourgeoisie—*R.I.*] took good care, under 'free', republican-democratic capitalism, to restore everything possible, and do everything possible and impossible for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes".⁴ This left its impress on the entire socio-economic and political development of the former slave-owning states. "For the 'emancipated' Negroes, the American South is a kind of prison where they are hemmed in, isolated and deprived of fresh air."⁵

The foundation for this semi-slave position of black Americans was set by the North's bourgeoisie and the South's plantation owners during Reconstruction,* as the North's bourgeoisie made a deal with the plantation owners, their former enemies during the Civil War, and betrayed their black allies who made such a great contribution to the military defeat of the rebel slave owners.

* Reconstruction began in the South after the Civil War of 1861-1865. In essence, it amounted to a restructuring of the socio-economic and political life of the southern states in the interests of the country's capitalist development. The Reconstruction period (1865-1877) was characterized by the active participation of broad masses of black Americans in bringing about bourgeois-democratic transformations in the former slave-owning states.

A terrorist regime was established in the South through the joint efforts of the bourgeois North and the plantation owners whose main point was to compel the former slaves through non-economic means to work for their bosses at miserable pay and in conditions of a severe racial discrimination and segregation.

Both the southern plantation owners and the northern bourgeoisie got the bloody dividends of this super exploitation of black Americans.

Hence, even the second American revolution did not lead to the solution of the problem of black Americans, not even within the narrow bounds of the bourgeois treatment of racial and national problems.

It seems natural to ask: why is the Negro problem in the US so tenacious that it could withstand the turbulence of two social revolutions? Where are the roots of traditional US racial discrimination? Why even today, despite the powerful unfolding of the movement against racial discrimination, do the crudest displays of discrimination and segregation of black Americans still take place in the US? Why is it that the world's most powerful capitalist country has not been able to reach even a compromise solution of this acute racial, civic, legal, and socio-economic problem?

Only a thorough study of the problem of black Americans, the history of the US Negro population, as well as the state of affairs at present can answer these very complex questions.

Over the whole of US history the position on the Negro question was one of the most important criteria defining the true democratism of statesmen, politicians, and public figures. This criterion retains its significance nowadays, as well. During the whole post-World War II period the Negro problem has been at the focus of US social and political life. A fierce battle between progressive and reactionary forces—a reflection of the crisis in American society—has been going on around this problem. This struggle between progressive and reactionary forces over issues of racial discrimination attests to the deep socio-political crisis of American imperialism.

Ralph Abernathy, the well-known spokesman of the Negro movement, remarked at a meeting of those participating in a march of the poor on Washington on June 20, 1968 that the promise of a great society had been turned into ash by American napalm in Vietnam; a sick society had been born

out of the bloody ash, and the government had played the part of midwife for this monster. All of the most acute problems of the American "sick society" intersect at the Negro problem.

The United States is a country of sharp social contrasts. In the world's richest country, 35 million people, according to official data, live on the brink of poverty. A large part of them are colored citizens, and among these unfortunates, an especially large number are black Americans. The super-exploitation of this population group has always been the source of enormous profits for the US ruling classes. Gus Hall, the General Secretary of the Communist Party USA, pointed out in 1980 that in one year alone, as the result of super-exploitation of black Americans, American monopolies and the US government made a profit of \$70 billion. And if you add in other colored Americans besides Blacks, the figure jumps to \$100 billion.

State-monopoly capitalism has turned this super-exploitation into a constantly operating factor. The Communist Party USA emphasizes in its program materials: "The whole complex system of oppression of the Afro-American people has as its primary objective the enrichment of the giant monopolies which own and control the country's productive resources. Black people live in misery because of capitalism, because racial oppression is enormously profitable."⁶

The great swelling of urbanization, the problem of US cities, is also to a great extent the Negro problem. The percentage of the Negro urban population has been growing swiftly in the post-war years. At present, black Americans make up between 20 and 70 per cent of the population in the largest US cities. In these cities, especially the industrial centers, Negro ghettos, where the most complex social problems are concentrated, are spreading like a malignant tumor.

Crime has been growing at a rapid rate in the post-war United States. In no other country in the world are powerful criminal syndicates so well organized as in the US. Clandestine gangster organizations controlling billions of dollars have become an influential force in the country's economic and political life and are part and parcel of the American way of life. Small-time, unorganized crime has also been rapidly growing and is especially great among black Americans. Reactionary forces attempt to explain this fact by some supposed racial deficiency of Blacks, but, in reality,

important factors of a socio-economic and political nature underlie this kind of crime.

Black Americans are America's true outcasts. Their position has sharply deteriorated during President Reagan's tenure in office. The monstrous arms race, abrupt cutback of social expenditures, and everything else called "Reaganomics" in the US has struck first and hardest at the most needy part of American society—black Americans. According to data for September 1982, unemployment among Negro youth reached 49.7 percent, the unemployment level for the colored population was three times greater than the average for the country as a whole; there was 16 percent illiteracy among Whites and 44 percent among Blacks; on the average, the black Americans made only 57 percent of the income of Whites.

All leaders of the Negro movement point out that the super-exploitation of black Americans which nets monopolies billions in profits is the foundation for Negro discrimination.

Ben Chavis, a pastor and leader of Black Youth Movement in North Carolina, gave this problem particular attention. In February 1971, Chavis and nine of his comrades stood trial for resisting some armed racist thugs. The jury, which included several Ku Klux Klan members, sentenced the group to a total of 282 years of prison, with Chavis getting the harshest sentence among them—34 years in prison.

An active struggle by the American and international public wrested the victims of this unfair verdict from their prison torture chambers. Free again, Chavis has been keeping up his active struggle against racial discrimination. Ben Chavis was fully consistent when he pinpointed the essence of the Reagan administration's racial policies: "President Reagan's economic program, giving preference to corporate interests, has sharply racial overtones. His policy hits especially hard at the oppressed national minorities whose standard of living is quite low as it is."⁷

Every US administration considers it necessary to do its bit in fanning the psychological war against the USSR and other socialist countries. President Carter unleashed a sweeping campaign "in defense" of civil rights in socialist countries. President Reagan has assumed the pose of a fighter against "international terrorism".

Carter and his unjustified ambitions have already receded into political oblivion. As far as Reagan's campaign against "international terrorism" goes, it is, as international public

opinion has acknowledged, a slightly masked policy of fighting against the national liberation movement. And, of course, the Washington propagandists see the "hand of Moscow" in terrorist acts occurring in every part of the globe.

In "defending civil rights" in socialist countries, Carter saw one of his main tasks as diverting the attention of the international and American public from the most crude violations of elementary civil rights of colored citizens in the US. In just the same way the Reagan administration, in leading its campaign against "international terrorism", is striving to camouflage its support of the terrorist regimes in El Salvador, Chile, Israel, and every other part of the globe. Another important goal of this campaign is to divert attention from the Reagan administration's terrorist course vis-à-vis colored Americans, Blacks first and foremost.

This terrorist course can be seen first of all in the fact that millions of black Americans have fallen under the millstone of Reaganomics. Their situation, miserable enough as it was, has gotten even worse as the result of the Reagan administration's economic policies. Racial discrimination against Blacks is further seen in the fact that the slightest protests against the policy of racial discrimination are cruelly suppressed.

The Reagan administration has begun a concerted attack on the gains made by black Americans in the 1960s in the course of a very persistent struggle by millions of Blacks and their white allies. In particular, the Reagan administration has granted tax breaks to schools and colleges which refuse to admit colored Americans. On January 19, 1982, the President stated outright that he was the initiator of this act.⁸

The terror against Blacks has taken on truly sadistic forms: the mass disappearance of Negro children has begun not only in the Southern US, but in the North, as well. The disfigured corpses of pre-teenage black-skinned Americans found by the police are proof of carefully planned acts of mass terror. It is amazing that the police seem unable to find those responsible for these acts of terrorism against the US black population.

Terror against Negroes can also be seen in the activation of the Ku Klux Klan. In the first two years alone that Reagan was in power, membership in this racist, thug organization grew by one-fourth. It has reached the point that Klansmen, dressed in their traditional "uniform" of white robes,

demonstrate in the center of Washington, while the police, defending their "civil rights", brutally beat residents of the capital who have come out to protest against this racist demonstration. It is not without reason that Wilkinson, the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, said that he thought President Reagan's views and those of the Ku Klux Klan were identical on most issues.

There is nothing sensational in the declaration if you consider that the American press has reported that another American president, Harry Truman, was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan and that Ronald Reagan, when he was still Governor of California, called participants in the Negro uprising of the 1960s "mad dogs".

The sharp deterioration in the position of broad masses of black Americans and the sweeping attack by reaction on their already limited civil rights pose new important problems for Americans opposed to racism. The National Chairman of the Communist Party USA, Henry Winston, in a speech at the conference dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the USSR, said: "Under present conditions the fight against racism is mandatory."⁹

In the post-war period, especially in the 1960s, the movement of black Americans for the first time after Reconstruction again took on a revolutionary character. In April and May of 1963, a powerful movement of Blacks began in Birmingham, Alabama, directed at all forms of racial discrimination and segregation. Practically all the city's Negro population took part in protest marches, the boycotting of companies and stores, and in sit-ins. The journal *Political Affairs* wrote about the events in Birmingham that they were "a democratic revolution of the new epoch".¹⁰

The powerful rise of the Negro movement in the post-war period took place not only because of internal factors. The collapse of colonial empires in Asia and Africa ricocheted right into the United States. It was fair to ask: why did the peoples of former colonies, at a low level of cultural and social development, win their state independence and become masters of their fate? In Africa alone from 1960 to 1973, 32 colonies gained their independence. At the same time, millions of black Americans living in the richest and industrially most developed capitalist country in the world were subject to discrimination and segregation.

The position of Blacks in the US is a very crude anachronism whose abolition is an urgent historical, economic, po-

litical, and, lastly, moral necessity. The swift rise of the national liberation movement in Africa has been having its direct influence on the US Negro movement. "The protestor against bus segregation in Montgomery and Tallahassee draws inspiration and precept from ... the independence stirrings in Africa."¹¹

The international aspect of the US Negro problem is also determined by the black Americans' movement receiving all possible support from the public in socialist countries, the international workers' and national liberation movements. Today, the struggle for the eradication of racism in all its forms has become an important integral part of the anti-imperialist fight on a world scale. Imperialism and racism are inseparably linked concepts.

The international communist movement, the most influential political force of our time, is doing much to raise the broad masses of the people in all countries against racism. The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties which met in 1969 pointed out the necessity of activating all forms of struggle "against the *man-hating ideology and practices of racialism* ... against the most ignominious phenomenon of our time, the barbarous persecution of the 25 million Negroes in the USA".¹²

The American Communists are carrying on an active struggle for the rights of Negroes in exceptionally difficult circumstances. It is the only party in the 200 years of the country's history which has from the very beginning of its existence consistently and steadily fought for the liberation of Blacks in the US from racial discrimination and segregation.

A deep theoretical analysis of the Negro problem and the working out of a strategy and tactics for the Party's fight to eradicate racism—this is an important contribution of the American Communists to the struggle of black Americans against racial discrimination. It is indicative that a number of the Communist Party's program provisions on the Negro issue are being used today by Negro leaders far removed from communist ideology.

Black Americans have made a great contribution to the development of US economy, art, culture, and history as a whole. This is a persuasive argument proving the complete justification of the demands by advocates of racial equality to see black Americans not as second-rate people, but as full-fledged citizens of the country. The history of the black people in the United States is not merely a 200-year narration

of slavery and racial discrimination. It is also the history of their never-ending struggle for freedom and human dignity, and the study of this struggle is a most urgent problem.

Its scientific value is determined by the fact that reactionary bourgeois historiography ignores or keeps silent about the heroic struggle of Blacks against slavery and racial discrimination. The political and practical goal of this most crude falsification of history is obvious: to paralyze the will of black Americans in the struggle for their rights and to convince Blacks that freedom was granted to them by Whites, that not struggle, but reform and agreement with the ruling circles is the high road to the solution of all the modern problems of black Americans.

There is no question that wide masses of black Americans need reforms which would alleviate their difficult position. But it is also obvious that a tireless struggle must be carried on for these reforms, that any means must be tried to bring them about.

American Marxist historians, many black American historians, and some bourgeois-liberal historians are studying the history of the struggle of black US citizens against slavery and racial discrimination. After the war, there arose in the USSR a school of historians fruitfully working on the study of the history and contemporary status of the Negro people in the US. Valuable monographs on the problems in this area have been published by I. A. Geyevsky, A. P. Korableva, L. N. Mitrokhin, E. L. Nitoburg, T. T. Timofeyev, and others.¹³ This has laid the foundation for the serious study in the USSR of the history of the Negro people in the US.

The study of the Negro problem in the US, especially the history of the struggle against slavery and racial discrimination, has great political significance. The experience of this heroic struggle is used by progressive forces in the US for mobilizing the efforts of anti-racists to decisive actions against all manifestations of racial discrimination.

The history of the struggle by black Americans against slavery and racial discrimination and the present state of the mass movement in the US against racial discrimination clearly attest that only through the active support of their white allies can black Americans successfully oppose racism. In today's world, the problem of creating a united front of black and white workers in the fight against racial discrimination and segregation is of special importance.

Generalizing and carefully studying the experience of the contemporary workers' movement in the US, the positive and negative historical experience of relations between black and white workers—this is what is necessary for creating a united anti-monopoly front of white and black US workers.

Today, the struggle against racial discrimination is an inseparable component of the general democratic and anti-monopoly front in the US. It opens up before the Negro movement the auspicious prospect of winning new allies among white working people. Bourgeois ideologists exaggerate racial intolerance among a certain part of the US white population, including part of the working people. They thereby hope to cover up the class essence of modern racism based on the interests of monopoly capital.

Black Americans are an important economic, political, and social force in the US. A unification of Negro fighters against racism with the progressive forces of the white population can occur only on an anti-monopolistic basis. The prospect of such an alliance frightens US monopolistic circles. This is why monopoly capital is directing its main strike against an alliance of white and black opponents of racial discrimination. To split apart the united front of opponents of racism and divide working people according to racial and national characteristics is the principal line of American reaction in the fight against opponents of racism. This is one of the modern variations of the policy "divide and rule", a policy as old as the exploiter world.

A policy aimed at splitting apart the alliance of white and black opponents of racism runs across serious difficulties. The growing self-awareness of the white working people is helping to gradually overcome racial prejudices. Black Americans fighting racism are seeking and finding ways for the Negro movement to spread beyond the narrow boundaries of purely racial problems. Blacks are ever more actively participating in the movement for democratizing US political life. They were active participants in the movement to halt the aggression of American imperialism in Vietnam and are taking the most active part against the arms race being conducted by the Reagan administration which threatens the world with catastrophic consequences. Black Americans are actively opposing other aggressive foreign-policy acts of the Reagan administration as well as the attack by ruling circles on the social, civil, and political rights of the Amer-

ican people. It is indicative that in the 1980 Presidential election, only 7 percent of Blacks voted for Reagan.

The fight of Blacks against slavery and racial discrimination is an important component of the democratic and revolutionary traditions of the American people and an inseparable component of US history. For this reason, studying the history of black Americans is a necessary condition for a correct understanding of the more important patterns of the United States' development.

The entire period after the Second World War the Negro problem has been constantly on the agenda of American politics. In these years black Americans and their white US allies have made fair success in the fight against the most flagrant aspects of racism. But even today, the basic factors in the area of economics, politics, and law which give rise to racial discrimination have not been eliminated in the US. This is one of the most important reasons for the inevitable intensification of the struggle by black Americans and all progressive forces in the US against racism.

The study of the economic, political, civic, legal, and moral aspects of the Negro problem in the US is of special interest under present circumstances. The Negro issue is not just a problem of today; its roots extend back even deeper than US history, back into the colonial period of the American continent.

For this reason, the book devotes great attention not only to the post-war aspects of the Negro question, but to the more important events in the history of the fight against slavery and racial discrimination, too. Of special interest are the revolutionary periods in American history: the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the South's Reconstruction. These turbulent revolutionary years were the fundamental landmarks in the history of the Negro people in the US and to a great extent they have determined the further development of the Negro movement and the contemporary state of the problem. Attention is therefore given first of all here to the history of black Americans in the period of the two American revolutions and during the "democratic revolution", as the rise of the black Americans' movement after the end of the Second World War, especially in the 1960s, is called in the United States.

Chapter I

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Black Slaves in the New World

The legalized trading in black slaves went on for almost four centuries. This dirty business was begun by the Portuguese in 1444 and was kept up until the eve of the US Civil War of 1861-1865. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal had a monopoly on the slave trade. Even in that long-ago day, the world was divided up on the principle of force. As Portugal's international positions got weaker, it gradually lost its monopoly on such a highly profitable source of getting rich as trading in black slaves.

Competition has been the most important driving force of capitalism at all stages of its development. Holland, France, England, Spain, Brandenburg, and England's American colonies waged the fight with Portugal for the monopoly on trade in black-skinned slaves. The problems in world politics from the 15th to the 19th century connected with the black slave trade were of the utmost importance. The slave trade gave rise to a number of wars and was an important reason for several other serious military conflicts.

The trading in black slaves was, using modern parlance, the crudest violation of all of man's most important rights. It was an act of international banditry whose most active participants were all colonial powers. The bloody trail of the slave trade stretches through capitalism's entire history.

Asiento, or the agreement for the monopolistic delivery of slaves to the Spanish colonies, kept changing hands like a bloody prize. After Portugal, it was Holland that grabbed *asiento* in 1640, then, in 1701, France. England, as the greatest seapower of the time, by the beginning of the 18th century had by the logic of force also become the world's foremost trader in slaves. In the words of the American Marxist historian William Foster, "in 1713, the English, by the Treaty of Utrecht, seized the filthy prize" and controlled it for 33 years until Spain, which owned huge holdings in

the Americas, began to take up this highly profitable business itself.

The English colonies in North America began to trade slaves on their own on a large scale in the late 17th century. Until then, the British Royal African Company owned the exclusive right to trade slaves exported from the English colonies. The slave trade was "democratized" in 1698, the monopoly being eliminated, and any vessel bearing the British flag could transport slaves. The government of Great Britain did not forget about its profits, either: every vessel carrying black slaves was assessed a 10 percent tax. This bloody tithe significantly added to the British budget.

Ship-owners in Britain's North American colonies, especially New England, began making use of their opportunities, and from here on the dirty business of slave-trading started flourishing in the colonies. It is consistent to ask how the Roman Catholic Church, the most influential ideological force of the time, felt about the slave trade. In 1482, the Vatican categorically prohibited, under pain of excommunication, turning coloreds who were born free into slaves or the buying of black slaves. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church considered their mission accomplished with this and took no real measures to cut off the slave trade. There is not one known incident where the Vatican carried out its threat of excommunication on traders in live goods. Slave-trading brought in enormous profits and, as has always been the case throughout capitalism's history, moral values got trampled under by practical profit, of which ministers of religion got no small recompense.

The propertied strata of the population have always rendered material aid to the Church. In the period under consideration, the bourgeoisie, merchants, and bankers built their well-being to a good extent on the trading in slaves and the exploitation of their labor. For just this reason, church leaders, while verbally condemning the slave trade, in deed offered it all possible help.

This was a real mutual guarantee: the state and the traders directly involved participated in the slave trade, and the ship-owners, industrialists, and bankers reaped huge profits from it. By its authority, the Church virtually covered over this misanthropic practice. No one dared stand up against the slave trade for fear of the strictest kind of sanctions.

Chiefs of African tribes also took a reprehensible stand. They sold their subjects and captives to white slave-traders

wholesale and retail. Tribes even waged wars to capture prisoners whom they could sell away to the slave-traders. Slave-trading drained the blood of African nations and inflicted terrible, irremediable harm on them. Hundreds of thousands of Africans died resisting being driven into slavery. It is impossible to calculate the enormous number of victims of the wars between African tribes trying to capture prisoners to sell them into slavery to the white traders. In pursuit of profits, the captains of vessels transporting slaves from Africa to America would load them into the ship holds like firewood. The overcrowding, lack of sanitation and elementary medical aid, and the tortures inflicted during the voyage from Africa to America all contributed to millions of Negroes perishing on the slave ships.

The "civilizing mission" of the Europeans in Africa led to terrible results. "The removal of the flower of African manhood left the continent impotent, stultified, and dazed,"² wrote the well-known American historian Franklin.

While furthering the rapid growth of capitalism in Europe and America, the slave trade exhausted the human, economic, and spiritual strengths of the long-suffering Black Continent. "While Europe and America rose," writes an American historian, "Africa sank, impoverished in its most basic resource—its youth."³ From this grave blow the peoples of Africa were unable to recover for all the rest of their subsequent history.

The history of trading in black slaves is the most convincing evidence that there is no crime that capitalism will not sink to for the sake of making a profit. The international slave trade was an important factor in the primary accumulation. The history of capitalism as a socio-economic formation was stained by this bloody crime whose consequences weigh, like a curse, on America's contemporary black citizens deprived as they are of the most elementary civil, economic, and political rights. The economic and cultural backwardness of the African countries is to a large extent the legacy of the slave trade and the colonial enslavement of the African peoples by the European powers.

The anti-humane essence of capitalism found its clear expression in the fact that the blood and sweat of the slaves cemented the economic foundation of capitalist social relations. Trade in black-skinned slaves was one of the chief sources of the primary accumulation. It was an "original" crime which elicited a series of criminal acts not only against

Blacks, but also against the white slaves of capital. Karl Marx wrote: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation."⁴

When the Spaniard Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon set ashore 500 Spaniards and 100 Negro slaves on what is now South Carolina, the slaves rebelled and their white masters were forced to flee to Europe.⁵ The history of black slavery the colonial Africa began with the successful rebellion of the slaves. An amazingly typical fact! From the very first day right up to the abolition of slave-owning during the Civil War of 1861-1865, black Americans have not let up their struggle for freedom. This incontrovertible historical fact persuasively repudiates the assertions of contemporary bourgeois apologists for slavery that black Americans were supposedly satisfied with their slave status, that they did not fight for their freedom, and that only the humaneness of the Whites led to the abolition of slavery in the US.

It is a historical fact that Blacks were among America's first settlers. William Foster wrote in his fundamental work, *The Negro People in American History*, that the first Negro slaves to come to America and settle at the mouth of the Pedee River in South Carolina pre-dated the Virginia settlers by almost a century, the latter being considered the first American colonists.⁶

It should be borne in mind that the Europeans began the settling of North America at a time when slavery was already an anachronism. All the same, the United States of America, the capitalist world's most developed state, went through a lengthy period of slavery, and not just in its colonial period of development, but later, too. The slave-owning economic system of the southern provinces in England's North American colonies (later, the southern US states) and the North's capitalist economic system for a long time co-existed and developed by complementing one another.

Marx wrote: "Slavery is ... an economic category of the highest importance. Without slavery North America, the most progressive country, would be turned into a patriarchal land. If North America were wiped off the map of the world

the result would be anarchy, the total decay of trade and of modern civilisation. But to let slavery disappear is to wipe North America off the map of the world. Since slavery is an economic category, it has existed in every nation since the world began. Modern nations have merely known how to disguise slavery in their own countries while they openly imported it into the New World."⁷

Thus, Negro slavery was the basis of capitalism's development in the United States. There were substantial reasons this historical paradox came about, firstly, of a socio-economic nature. The first Europeans settling in North America encountered the difficult problem of needing a work force. The huge continent was very sparsely populated. A large reserve of "free" lands, the opportunity to acquire one's own land relatively easily, and the on-going process of workers and tradesmen turning into small landowners all helped create unique conditions for capitalism's development in North America compared to Europe and other parts of the world. Slavery became an economically unavoidable category in North America without which it would not have been possible to develop capitalist relations. There were factors in the colonies hindering the creation of an industrial reserve army, along with the absolute dependence of the working class on the class of capitalists. Under these conditions of the socio-economic development of Britain's North American colonies, the work force problem could be solved only through compulsory measures.

The white invaders first tried to turn the Indians into slaves. This was logical from the economic point of view, since it cost a lot to bring over slaves from across the ocean. The number of Indian slaves was fairly significant in certain colonies, and in the first decades of America's colonization this form of slavery played a definite part in the colonies' economic development. Indian slaves were completely the chattels of the colonists, were bought and sold, could be inherited, and, naturally, as with all slaves, the strictest measures of non-economic compulsion to labor were applied to them.

Indian slave labor was fairly widely used in the colonies, especially in the first years of their existence. It soon became obvious, though, that the Indian slaves could not be counted on as a work force. There were several reasons for this. The native population was sharply attenuated from deaths in the wars that the white colonists were continually

waging to exterminate them. Epidemics, especially the plague, left the Indian tribes dreadfully ravaged.⁸⁻¹⁰ America's freedom-loving natives actively resisted enslavement, would flee from servitude, and, knowing the area well, could find good hiding spots from search parties. Indian tribes often raided plantations and freed their tribesmen from slavery, getting savage revenge on the white slaveholders in the process.

An American historian has written: "In America there were Indians who could be captured and sold as slaves. Unfortunately, the Indians were inclined to escape to their tribes and then return in increased numbers to pay their respects to their former masters by taking their scalps."¹¹ Failing to turn the natives into obedient slaves, the Whites began a full-scale extermination of the Indians in areas they wanted to colonize. It was at this time that the cynical slogan "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" appeared among the white settlers. The history of American capitalism is stained with bloody acts of genocide—the extermination of the native Indian population.

The white colonists employed sadistic measures of extermination in their wars against the Indians. Bradford, the Governor of the Plymouth Colony, reported the annihilation of an Indian tribe: "It is a fearful sight to see them frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same and horrible was the stink and stench thereof. But the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice and they gave praise thereof to God."¹²

Having failed in their attempts to enslave the Indians, the bourgeoisie and plantation owners were not averse to enslaving the white population. White slavery is one of peculiar characteristics of the colonial period in American history. At the beginning, criminals and political prisoners were exiled to the North American colonies. England's rulers looked on their North American colonies as a kind of cesspool where society's rejects could be cast off and a good profit made in the process. The colonists began to use the white prisoners at the hardest and lowest-paying jobs. The following figures attest to the large scale on which the labor of prisoners was used: from 1717 through 1775 alone, i.e., up to the beginning of the Revolutionary War, about 40,000 prisoners arrived in the colonies.¹³

It soon became apparent, however, that the forced labor of prisoners was unproductive. The convicts were unable to solve the difficult problem of working hands in Britain's

numerous North American colonies. For this reason, another form of compulsory labor using Whites became common—the use of “indentured servants”. The great majority of European immigrants who came to America were poor people driven from their homelands by dire want. They had not enough funds to pay the expensive passage to the colonies, and so signed a contract before leaving for America, which bound them for a period of 3-7 years to work as virtual slaves in order to pay off their debt for being ferried across the ocean.

In essence, the indentured servant was no different from a slave: he could be bought, sold, bartered, given cruel bodily punishment, had neither freedom of movement nor right to property, and even had to get his master’s permission to get married. Serious crimes, such as running away, were punished by extending the indentured servant’s contract. In a certain sense, the white indentured servant was even worse off than the black slave. A slave’s master to some extent took care of him like he would of his own property. An early death or loss of a slave’s ability to work was a significant material loss for the owner. The indentured servant, though, was temporary property, and so his master would try to squeeze as much profit out of him as he could, and in as short a time as possible. For this reason, the white servant’s life and labor conditions were especially trying.

Modern apologists for slave ownership justify slavery and racial discrimination against black Americans by contending that the Negro race is inferior, its members are deficient and of limited intelligence from birth and capable of labor only in conditions of the meanest non-economic compulsion. White slavery in America’s colonial period completely repudiates these utterly unfounded assertions. Capitalism stands in principle “above” racial prejudices. Profit and profit alone is the most important criterion by which the bourgeoisie approaches the question of interrelations between people of different races, nationalities, and faiths. The class, and not racial or national approach to the problem of people’s relationships is the most important criterion guiding the bourgeoisie in its economic policies. Marx emphasized that “political spokesmen, jurists, moralists and theologians of the slaveholder’s party had already sought to prove, not so much that Negro slavery is justified, but rather that colour is a matter of indifference and the working class is everything born to slavery”.¹⁴

The white indentured servants played a significant role

in the colonies’ economic development. It is sufficient to point out that from the beginning of colonization to the Revolutionary War 250,000 indentured servants came over to the North American colonies.¹⁵ If you consider that the total population of the colonies on the war’s eve was 3 million, it is obvious that indentured servants comprised a goodly portion of the work force there. One must also take into account that they did not really draw a salary and that their cruel exploitation brought in sizeable profits. For all this, however, the indentured servant institution did not long survive the colonial period. It, too, was unable to solve the ever more acute problem of work hands. Because of weakly centralized management, it was difficult to organize effective protection for these white workers on America’s vast expanses. As opposed to the black slave, the white servant who ran away had no external features to distinguish him and show him as someone’s social property to be returned. Fugitives could safely hide out in the colonies’ great expanses.

The numerous wars being waged in Europe sharply increased the demand for cannon fodder. “Surplus” labor was being recruited for the armies of the warring states on ever larger scales, and the stream of indentured servants setting out across the ocean gradually dropped off. A new source of manpower urgently needed to be found. Africa was to become the main such source. The exceptional profitability of the slave trade brought new hordes of adventurers to Africa determined to get rich quick. The stream of slave ships bound for America swelled....

An American historian has drawn a horrible picture of slaves being transported on one of these ships: “When the sun set, the whole band went below. There the space assigned each to lie down in was six feet by sixteen inches. The bare boards were their beds. To make them lie close, the lash was used. For one to turn from his right side to his left was impossible, unless the long line of cramped and stifened sufferers turned with him. But the misery of a night was as nothing to the misery of a stormy day. Then the hatches were fastened down, tarpaulins were drawn over the gratings, and ventilation ceased; the air grew thick and stifling; the floor became wet with perspiration; the groaning and panting of the pent-up Negroes could be heard on deck... It was not uncommon for as many as five dead bodies to be brought up and flung over the ship’s side. On a slaver mak-

ing the middle passage a mortality of thirty percent was not rare."¹⁶

Despite the large number of fatalities on the slave ships, this inhumane business brought in fabulous profits. It has been calculated that while the slave trade went on Africa lost not less than 60 million of its people.¹⁷

When black slaves began to be used en masse on the plantations, slave owners were quickly convinced of the indisputable advantages of using Blacks as opposed to Indians or white slaves. The Blacks tolerated the tropical and subtropical climate of the southern colonies far better than the Whites. As a rule, the black slaves were physically strong—the result of natural selection: only the strongest and most hardy could endure the terrible ocean voyage. Of these physically strong people the same kind of generation was born, one able to withstand hard labor on the plantations. The black slave had trouble running away, since his skin color virtually precluded any possibility of his hiding even if he got away alright. An American historian is right to stress that both white and black slaves were equally deprived of rights. "Although all indentured servants had the same legal rights, they did not have the same color. That, of course, was obvious all along, but the significance of this difference in color was simply not appreciated for some time."¹⁸ Also of no little importance was the fact that the black slave had no rights under the law, which opened the way for the most unrestrained exploitation of him. And the slave owners were not slow to take advantage of this.

The number of black slaves grew by leaps and bounds. By the start of the Revolutionary War, there were 3 million people in the 13 American colonies, about 600,000 of whom were Blacks, and the vast majority, slaves. There were no more than 50,000 free Blacks. Black slavery also was present in the North, but black slaves were used there basically as house servants (there were a total of about 55,000 Blacks in the North on the eve of the Revolutionary War).

The situation in the southern provinces was fundamentally different from that in the North. Black slaves were the decisive, underlying productive force in the southern colonies. They were used for the most part over an enormous area stretching from Maryland to Georgia. In four colonies—Virginia, South Carolina, Maryland, and North Carolina—the percentage of slaves versus the overall population was fairly high. The economies of these four colonies were clear-

ly of a slave-owning nature. The number of Blacks, the ratio between slaves and free persons, the territorial distribution of slaves in individual provinces—all these were substantial factors which were to play an important part in the future battle of the colonies for independence.

The number of slaves in individual provinces was of especial importance, since, to a goodly degree, this determined a province's position in the colonies' ripening revolutionary struggle for independence. The extent of slaveholding relations in the provinces also depended in large part on the number of slaves. The following table is very pertinent in this respect.

Number of Black Slaves on the Eve of the Revolutionary War¹⁹

| Southern Provinces | | Northern Provinces | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|--------|
| Virginia | 165,000 | New York | 15,000 |
| S. Carolina | 110,000 | New Jersey | 7,600 |
| Maryland | 80,000 | Pennsylvania | 10,000 |
| N. Carolina | 75,000 | Connecticut | 5,000 |
| Georgia | 16,000 | Massachusetts | 3,500 |
| Delaware | 9,000 | Rhode Island | 4,300 |
| | | New Hampshire | 600 |
| Total | | | |
| | 455,000 | | 46,000 |

These figures show that slaves did not play any kind of important role in the economies of the northern colonies, as there were not very many of them. In the southern colonies, the situation was different.

The proportion of slaves within the overall population of those colonies geared to the slave-owning system of economy swiftly rose. Figures for the largest slave-owning colony, Virginia, are illustrative. Three hundred Blacks lived there in 1650, including free citizens as well as slaves. As a rule, the few free black Americans that there were were set free by their white masters. A small number were ransomed from slavery by their fellow tribesmen. A free Black in the South was a very rare thing, although there were many more of these in the northern colonies.

The number of slaves in the South rapidly increased. "By 1671, Virginia had 2,000 slaves, and in 1715 almost one-third of the total population of 95,500 was in a state of lifelong bondage."²⁰ There were slightly fewer slaves in Maryland.

By 1760, the Negro population in South Carolina outnumbered the white. The swift increase in the proportion of slaves in the principal slave-owning colonies had important socio-economic and political consequences not only for these colonies, but for all of England's North American provinces, as well. The dark mark of slavery covered the entire life of the American colonies. Marx gave particular importance to the numerical ratio between slaves and free residents. He wrote: "This proportion is in fact decisive. It is the thermometer with which the vital fire of the slave system must be measured."²¹

Each large capitalist country had its own specific genesis of capitalism. In the US, slavery was one of the most important peculiarities in the process of primary accumulation. The super-exploitation of Negroes, the sweat and blood of slaves, millions of white, red-skinned and, most of all, black-slave corpses were made the foundation of the American capitalist system of economy.

American capitalism's genesis is a unique paradox in history. It was based on slavery, the most archaic and historically unpromising economic system. For all that, though, American capitalism went from archaism to the most powerful capitalist country in the world in an exceedingly short time, taking just over 100 years, from July 4, 1776, the day the US was formed, to 1894, when the US moved into first place in the world in volume of industrial production.

The United States developed at a very rapid rate. "Changes which took centuries to come about in England took place here in the course of several years."²² We will find the answer to many of the complex problems of American capitalism's genesis in its early stages when we analyze questions connected with black slavery.

The plantations of the South, where tobacco, rice, indigo, sugar, cotton, and other crops were grown, were geared from the very beginning to selling their goods on the world market. Demand for these crops constantly rose, causing in turn a continuous increase in the demand for black slaves.²³ The particulars entailed with raising tropical crops were an important stimulus to the development of plantation slavery. The crops tilled by the slaves and exported by the South—cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc.—were profitable only when produced by large groups of slaves on a mass scale and on the broad expanses of naturally fertile soil requiring only crude labor. The exploitation of the black slaves' labor

brought in tremendous profits. After 2-3 years of work the black slave paid back the money his owner had spent to buy him. Everything after that was pure profit.²⁴

The testimony of contemporaries makes clear that the most cruel exploitation of black slaves allowed the amount of tobacco exported from the colonies to Europe to be rapidly increased. England exported 2,500 pounds of tobacco in 1616, 333,100 in 1626, over 28 million pounds in 1688, and 38 million in 1700.²⁵ The huge profits which the tropical crops raised by the slaves brought in made slavery in the South highly profitable. Slavery, an insignificant economic factor in its time, became the basis for the whole colonial system of economics.

Owing to the predatory system of land use, the most prolific lands were quickly used up, after which agriculture became unprofitable. This was the economic reason for the unrestrained expansionism of the planters-slave owners. The slave-owning economic system is reminiscent of a bicyclist who must constantly keep moving forward so as not to fall over. The continuous expansion of the territory where slaves were used was what made the Union of slave-owning states viable.

Slavery became the basis for the plantation system by virtue of purely economic factors. Each new socio-economic formation leads to the sharp growth of labor productivity, the rapid development of productive forces, and great advances in the area of production relations. However, in the particular historical and socio-economic conditions of North America's colonization period, slavery, an important factor in capitalism's development there, was the concentrated expression of economic backwardness,²⁶ as Professor A. V. Yefimov, the founder of American studies in the Soviet Union, has stressed.

The slaves used the most primitive implements of labor, and work on the plantations required neither special knowledge nor any sort of professional skill. The brute physical strength of the black slaves was the chief driving force of plantation agriculture. The slave-owning system was a deformed hybrid of slavery and capitalism. Hired labor, the most important factor in capitalist production relations, did not exist in this system. In addition, elements of the capitalistic exploitation of the black slave, who was the main producer of material benefits, were represented in the plantation system. By exploiting the slave, the plantation owner

made a direct profit and got all the surplus labor which was found in the surplus product under this system of exploitation. The planters-slave owners managed their economy on capitalist principles. They owned the means of production—the land and the producers themselves in the form of black slaves.

In characterizing the basis of American slavery, Marx wrote that on the “plantations—where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, capitalist mode of production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of Negroes precludes free wage-labor, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by *capitalists*. The method of production which they introduce has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted on to it.”²⁷

The climatic condition in the northern colonies did not permit the raising of the tropical plants which enjoyed such a great demand on the world market. For this reason, industry, trades, and commerce were what chiefly developed there. Another economic category was necessary for them—hired labor. For the North, hired labor was more advantageous and brought in a larger profit than slave labor.

It should be pointed out, though, that in the northern colonies’ agricultural production slave labor was also frequently used in the early period of colonization. But the work there was largely of a seasonal character, and it was not profitable for a farm owner to keep a slave in the off-season since he made little profit off him then. This was why on the small farms of the North the hired labor of agricultural workers and farm hands predominated.

One cannot understand the distinctive system of slavery in the US or, in particular, its phenomenal vitality, despite its being a completely archaic economic system, without also considering the economic needs of the mother country. England made huge profits off the slave trade in the colonial period. Liverpool, Bristol, London, and other cities grew to a large extent on money made by trading in slaves. After the colonies declared their independence, the economic interests of the mother country in slavery did not slacken, but in fact grew even more, since the cotton plantations of the US South became the main source of raw materials for the English textile industry. “Slavery in the United States of America was based far less on force than on the English cotton industry,” wrote Engels. Wherever cotton did not grow and

slaves were not raised for sale, slavery “died out of itself without any force being used, simply because it did not pay”.²⁸

The class interests of the North American plantation owners and bourgeoisie stood watch over slavery, which also relied on the economic, military, and political might of England, the “industrial plant of the world”. This is what accounted for slavery’s great tenacity, so striking at first glance.

Black slaves comprised about 20 percent of the population in the colonies before the War for Independence. Along with the free Blacks, they greatly contributed to solving the colonies’ economic problems. But it is imperative to consider not only the percent ratio of slave to free labor. In defining the black slaves’ contribution to the colonies’ economic development, one must also take into account the fact that they started laboring from childhood and worked their whole lives through until their physical strength was exhausted. Plantation work days stretched for 18 or 19 hours under the scorching sun. The meager way they were fed, virtual absence of medical care, and the overwhelming physical burdens pressed upon them—all contributed to making their average life-spans quite short. A slave crushed by the daunting severity of compulsory labor was simply replaced by a new slave brought over from Africa or who had been born in the colonies.

The black slaves played a significantly greater role in the economy of the colonies than their part in the general population might have called for. In the southern provinces, the slaves’ part in production was decisive. The hardest labor fell to the lot of the young slaves. In essence, they were the plantations’ only work force. If a slave lived to middle age on the plantations, to say nothing of old age, hard productive labor was already beyond him.

Women slaves were exploited no less than men. This, too, was an important factor, since white women in the colonial period were frequently burdened down with a large family and a multitude of house chores and therefore hardly figured at all in productive labor. Besides socio-economic reasons, religious and historical traditions helped account for this.

The influence of slave owners in colonial politics was proportional to the slave-owning system’s role in the economy. This became particularly important on the eve of the Revo-

lutionary War and when the colonies were fighting for their independence.

The process of primary accumulation presupposes the separation of the immediate producer from the land. In the US slave-owning system this process took on an incredibly deformed character that was nevertheless advantageous to capitalism. The slave was born, labored, and died on the plantation. It would seem he was inseparably tied to the land, blocking the development of the process of separating the immediate producer from the land. In reality, the slave was merely a labor force deprived of all rights within the slave-owning system which, under the pressure of non-economic compulsion, did whatever was necessary for the development of capitalist production.

The growth in plantation production promoted the rather rapid development of the process of separating not the slave, but another immediate producer—the small farmer—from the land. To a certain extent, the development of this process was delayed by the presence of a large fund of “free lands”. Unable to compete with the powerful plantation owner, the small farmer could resettle somewhere farther off. By force of arms, he would take the so-called free lands from the Indians and try to make a new go at farming. This, however, was merely a reprieve in the death sentence. Because of its rapacious use of natural resources, slave-owning was able to exist and develop only by continually expanding to new lands not yet exhausted. Like a giant steam-roller, the slave-owning plantations followed after the land-squatters, crushing and destroying them.

Another factor was the material means which the farmer had to have in order to resettle on new lands and which were very difficult to save up in view of the bitter competitive struggle with the rich and powerful planters-slave owners. In must be borne in mind that besides his economic potential, the planter could rely on the firm support of the authorities back in England in his fight with the farmer, since they were watching out for the class interests of the slaveholders.

With large incomes from southern crop sales on the world market, the plantation owners would invest in the further expansion of plantation agriculture. They generally used their profits to buy slaves and acquire new lands, the latter either being taken or bought up for next to nothing from the Indians and small farmers who had been ruined in the competitive struggle with the planters.

The planters had certain advantages in the competitive struggle with the farmers. Their plantations were usually located close to transportation facilities, for example, making shipments of crops and other items necessary for production easy. The planters tried to locate near seaports or navigable rivers and close to land routes, too.

With this access to transportation, particularly by sea and river, the owners of plantations frequently turned into middlemen-merchants. They would sell the farmers industrial goods from the northern province or even from abroad. The small farmer who grew his crops far from transportation routes was frequently compelled to sell them to his neighboring plantation owner. In this way, the farmer's bondage to the planter-slave owner quickly developed and, as a rule, ended with the complete ruin of the former. Many of the small farmers, unable to stay competitive, swelled the ranks of hired laborers, going to work on the plantations as overseers, slave-drivers, or agricultural workers. This was how the process of separating the immediate producer, the farmer, from the means of production, the land, took place in colonial America. This proved an integral part in the development of the process of primary accumulation in the colonies.

Expanding their plantations was vitally important for the slave owners and was solved also by buying land rights from indentured servants who had worked out their contracts. The indentured servant usually received 50 acres of land upon the expiration of his contract, a large parcel by European standards. But the indentured servant, as a rule, finished out his contract just as poor as when he arrived in America.

Having sold his plot for a pittance, the former indentured servant would frequently hire himself out as a farm hand to the same planter who had bought his land—the land which had cost the servant so dearly.

The Soviet historian A. S. Samoilov, a well-known scholar on Britain's North American colonies, has written that colony officials, land speculators, and plantation owners would buy up “land rights from former indentured servants. The explanation for their widespread renunciation of their own rights to a piece of land is that they finished their terms in such a miserable and penurious situation that they had no means by which to start farming the land they received. For this they needed at least some small capital, anyway.”²⁹

The conversion of the indentured servant into a hired agricultural worker in the final analysis also helped further the separation of the immediate producer from the land and the development of the process of primary accumulation in Britain's North American colonies. Former indentured servants hired themselves out on the plantations not only as agricultural workers, but also as overseers and slave-drivers. Their "labor" furthered the development and strengthening of the slave-owning system and, thereby, the development of American capitalism.

Slavery's part in the development of American and world capitalism is enormous. "Direct slavery," wrote Marx, "is as much the pivot of our industry today as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery no cotton; without cotton no modern industry. It is slavery which has made the colonies valuable; the colonies have created world trade; world trade is the necessary condition of large-scale machine industry. Thus, before the traffic in Negroes began, the colonies supplied the Old World with only very few products and made no visible change in the face of the earth."³⁰

In colonial America's specific historical conditions slavery proved to be profitable from the economic standpoint. For socio-economic formations based on the exploitation of man by man, the profit motive is the most important criterion determining the expediency of any, even the most immoral or archaic, forms of interrelations between people. At a certain stage of history, slavery promoted the development of capitalist relations but, inasmuch as hired labor was excluded as the basis of the capitalist mode of production, slavery hindered the development of the capitalist system of economy. This meant that upon making its contribution to capitalism's development, slavery was invariably going to disappear.

This solution to the problem was unavoidable, but could be realized only when American society developed to a higher level and when capitalism there would no longer need slavery, since the slave-owning system of plantation agriculture would impede the further development of capitalist relations. This occurred at a later period in American history, but in colonial times slavery was still an integral part of the "American way of life" with all the attributes of physical and moral subjugation of the individual inherent in slavery.

Down with Slavery!

The apologists for slave ownership talk much about the virtues of the slave owners, supporting their assertions with economic arguments that the master was supposedly concerned about keeping his slaves alive and healthy and that to do so he gave them all the necessities for living and working. These arguments are just as groundless as assertions that the present-day employer who makes a profit off the worker's exploitation has an interest in maintaining his health and improving his material well-being. In capitalist countries today any worker who becomes disabled or can no longer bring in a profit can be replaced by any number of others from a great reserve labor force.

One must take into account that slavery, as we have already said, was based on non-economic compulsion. The slave had no interest whatsoever in the results of his labor and could be made to work only by force. The physical repressions slaves underwent were dictated first of all by economic necessity. This was how the system worked, and not merely the excesses of some immoral slave owners, as apologists for slave ownership attempt to maintain.

The history of American slavery is the dreadful story of millions of people shackled in irons, lashed raw from the overseer's whip, beaten or tortured for the slightest disobedience, and mercilessly destroyed if they attempted to defend their human rights. Legislation in the colonies reduced the black slave to a chattel. In the colony of Maryland, for instance, the law placed the slave in the same category with "working beasts, animals of any kind, stock, furniture, plate, books, and so forth."³¹

Gradually, as slavery expanded and black slaves came out more and more for their freedom, an entire system of the juridical regulation of slaves' "rights" and obligations was introduced. In 1680, Virginia, the chief slave-owning colony, was the first to introduce a common slavery code which included all laws passed in the colony regulating the status of black slaves. In subsequent years other colonies followed Virginia's example, also passing laws on slaves, which were termed "Black Codes". While the codes varied slightly, they copied each other on the main points. Black slaves were declared the permanent, lifelong property of the planter and were handed down by heredity. The children of black slaves also became the slave owner's property, by

law belonging to their mother's master. Children born from a mixed marriage of slave and free person were declared slaves.

In the new Program of the Communist Party USA it is stressed that under the slave-owning system "black man, women and children" were used as "chattels".³²

Slaves had no civil, judicial, or marital rights. The codes gave the slave owner the right to use any physical punishments on slaves. Fugitives were returned by force, and the death penalty awaited any who rebelled. The well-known American historian and active participant in the Negro movement, W. E. B. DuBois, a winner of the International Lenin Peace Prize, wrote that "crucifixion, burning, and starvation were legal modes of punishment".³³

Frightened by continual slave uprisings, plantation owners forbade anything that might in the slightest extent threaten their safety. Blacks were not permitted to carry weapons, assemble, keep dogs, or hire horses. They were denied the right to testify against Whites or move about in groups of more than seven without a white person in attendance. They were not permitted to use liquor, engage in commerce, leave the plantation without the master's permission, etc.

The Black Codes also gave detailed rules for the capture of runaway slaves. Runaways were declared outlaws and any White was allowed to kill them. Since the slave was the sole property of his owner, his murder was usually not considered a crime, even if it was done sadistically. One slave owner in Maryland, for instance, burned his slave alive in 1656 by pouring hot liquid lead over him. The court pronounced the murderer not guilty, since, in its opinion, the slave was "incorrigible".

Slave owners were very reluctant to liberate slaves even when this would have been economically profitable for them. They were afraid of creating a precedent and did not want the slaves seeing "bad" examples. If the master set a slave free, he was obligated to pay his passage to Africa, which was quite expensive. Nevertheless, the number of free Blacks gradually rose, reaching about 50,000 by the end of the colonial period. Part of those who received freedom would in turn ransom their relatives.

The black slave could save up money and ransom himself only if his master consented to his hiring himself out to some other employer, and this did not happen often, since

plantation life hardly ever gave the slave a chance to learn a trade. And if the slave did acquire some trade by virtue of his own exceptional talents, it was more advantageous for the master to use his labor for himself and not let him go off and make money on the side. Occasionally slave owners would liberate slaves who had done some heroic feat. It even happened, though infrequently, that masters would free their slaves from humanitarian considerations.

The situation of free Blacks, especially in the southern colonies, where plantation agriculture prevailed, was not much better than the slaves'. They were restricted in a great number of ways. Most of the time they had no right to vote and were not permitted to give evidence against Whites in court. Free Blacks were categorically prohibited from marrying white women. In Maryland and Georgia, the restrictions on free Blacks were especially severe. There a free Black could be put back into slavery for merely crossing the colony's borders or marrying a slave-woman.

The Black Codes created a juridical basis for the crudest violations of even those few rights which the free Blacks had. Instances of free Blacks being kidnapped and sold into slavery were commonplace. Once sold into slavery, the Black had virtually no opportunity to take his case to court.

Slavery is such an immoral phenomenon that not only the slaves, but also many people from the free population, as a rule those who did not receive a direct profit from slave ownership, firmly demanded the abolition of this most shameful and savage system of man destroying man. All through American history, including in the colonial period, slavery met with strong opposition. Slave owners could not therefore restrict themselves to repressive measures in order to maintain their slave property. Although slaves could be made to obey by force of arms, such methods of defending class interests could not be employed against white opponents of slavery.

Slave owners made abundant use of moral-psychological means for justifying and popularizing slavery. Religion, the faithful defender of the interests of the ruling classes, played a special part. It faithfully served the slave owners, sanctifying the shameful institution of slavery with all its authority.

"On most plantations," an American historian has pointed out, "the religious instruction of Negro slaves" was consid-

ered an indispensable part of plantation management."³⁴ In both the South and North, the Church treated slavery as a completely natural phenomenon. An American scholar on Negro slavery in colonial New England has written that "the Anglican Church did not oppose slavery and ... many of its ministers were slaveholders".³⁵

The Holy Fathers not only preached the slaves the necessity of bearing their cross to the end and obeying their masters submissively. They spared no efforts in defending the slave owners' interests, even going so far as to crudely falsify the Holy Scriptures. Different variations in the theory of the so-called divine predetermination of black slavery surfaced in the colonial period. By crudely distorting the Bible, proponents of this theory maintained that Negroes were the direct descendants of Ham, Cain, and other negative characters in the Scriptures. In their unrestrained fantasy they went so far as to declare the mythical serpent-seducer black! Ministers of religion, especially in the South, tried to persuade their parishioners in their sermons that the divine curse weighed on the Black. The very color of his skin, according to them, proves that even if he is a human being, he is only a second-rate one, retarded, and created from the day he was born for obedience to Whites.

William Foster wrote: "The special role of the Church, in all its sections, in the conquest and exploitation of the colonial Americas, was twofold: first, it provided a moral and religious cover for the many barbarities that were committed in the course of the whole life of the colonies; and, second, it paralyzed the resistance of the people by capturing their minds with a benumbing ruling-class-inspired religion."³⁶ Foster cited the words of a slaveholder who said: "Let us take care that when we kill and wound we do it in defense of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that in his favor and in his service we may win Heaven by means of the lance and the knife."³⁷

The whole history of slavery in the US attests that Blacks were never reconciled to their fate. The history of the Negro people is the history of never-ending attempts by Blacks to abolish slavery by any means. But these attempts inevitably ended in failure. The Blacks were piteously punished after each uprising. Common methods of reprisal included burning them alive, drawing and quartering them, hanging them, and branding them with hot iron. Thousands of Blacks fell victim to slaveholders' acts of terror, but

new fighters for freedom kept taking the places of those who fell.

Slave owners and their ideological defenders—church ministers—had no illusions as to the docility of the black slaves. This is why defenders of slaveholding did not stake everything on the mere armed suppression of Blacks struggling for their freedom. Slave owners also strove to disarm them spiritually and morally. Ministers of religion preached Blacks fatalism and resignation to their fate. They tried every means to convince them that there was no way out of their state of slavery. All church services directed at Blacks told them that disobedient slaves would be damned and go to hell. Only submission, patience, obedience, and carrying out the Church's behests would give the slave a chance of getting to heaven. And in heaven, as the clergymen would tirelessly prophesy, there are no poor and no rich, no slaves and no slave owners—all people are equal there. Religion was an important weapon on the side of the slave owners in the defense of their class interest.

The effect of religious sermons on Blacks was all the greater since the overwhelming majority of them were illiterate. Illiteracy among Blacks was dictated primarily by the socio-economic conditions under which plantation farming developed. The primitive nature of the labor, the complete absence of machines, and the utilization of the simplest tools of labor—all enabled the planters to carry on production with utterly illiterate workers.

All through its history, slavery, as a degrading system of economy and relations between people, continuously and in ever growing dimensions kept producing illiteracy, savagery, and moral corruption. Slavery led to the moral degradation not only of Blacks, but of Whites, as well. The huge army needed to keep the slaves in line survived parasitically off slavery. The overseers, slave-drivers, and other menials employed by the slave owners hardly differed from the slaves themselves in their level of education and culture. Their "work" also did not require any kind of intellectual exertion.

These were the more important socio-economic factors determining the almost complete illiteracy of the great majority of the population in those regions where plantation farming prevailed. It is indicative that in the North the percentage of those able to read and write among the working population was far higher than in the South.

At the same time, illiteracy and the terribly low level of cultural development were not just side products of the slave-owning economic system—they were artificially cultivated among Blacks, since it was easier to hold an illiterate, unenlightened person in obedience. All of world history demonstrates that no people can be free who do not know what freedom is.

In all the colonies, the Black Codes looked upon teaching Blacks how to read and write as the gravest kind of crime for which pupils and teachers alike were severely punished, and this applied to free Blacks as well as slaves. This is one more persuasive proof that free Blacks in the South hardly lived any better than their slave counterparts. The use of religion and other means of ideological influence for justifying slave ownership was extended to the white flock as well as the black. The slave owners would use any means for convincing the white colonists that slavery was not only economically advantageous, but was also justified ethically. They sought to prove that slavery was the natural and normal status of Blacks. This propaganda met with a certain success, too.

Anti-black sentiments and racist notions took deep root in American society as early as the colonial period. Colonization and slavery developed in parallel. Slavery became America's constant companion, and many colonists got used to regarding the black slave as an inevitable and necessary attribute of American life, legalized from the first days of colonization and which had become an integral part of the American way of life. Religious sermons did their job. It is noteworthy that even Abolitionists—the opponents of slavery—often appealed to the Church for the abolition of this shameful institution. This was logical. Both adherents and opponents of slavery sought and found in church dogmas confirmation of their positions. It is a known fact that in the early stages of practically every country's history, socio-political movements have manifested themselves in every manner of action to the accompaniment of various religious slogans. This has been explained by the Church's prominent role in spiritual and socio-political life. In England's North American colonies, the Church would often substitute for the school, university, or cultural center. The Church was the traditional meeting place for discussing important issues which agitated society. Obviously, the Church could not avoid such a burning

problem as slavery and the Abolitionist, anti-slavery movement.

Religion in colonial America was a complex conglomerate of various churches and sects. Many enemies of the official churches in Europe fled to America in search of a "promised land" where they would be free to worship as they would. The structure of Christian religious establishments in America was complex and contradictory, just as the class and social structures of the time were. For that reason, there is nothing surprising in the statement of Herbert Aptheker, the well-known American historian and author of many works on the history of black Americans, that "religious groups ... and particularly the Quakers made decided advances in anti-slavery opinion and action".³⁸

The Quaker sect was a mixed bag in its social composition. It is entirely natural, then, that there was no unity within the Quaker ranks on how to treat the slavery issue. Moreover, the class watershed was clearly observed here. Quakers belonging to the working segments of the populace—small or middle farmers, tradesmen, workers, professionals, petty bourgeoisie—comprised the backbone of the Abolitionist movement within the Quaker sect. Then there were the well-to-do Quakers who supported slavery. What is more, many of these, ignoring all important tenets in Quaker teaching, took an active part in the filthy and bloody affair of trading slaves. They had a special ship which regularly made runs between Africa and America to fetch live goods for the colonial slave markets.

The first known collective protest by Quakers against slavery took place in 1688 when the Germantown Quakers appealed to the members of their sect to repudiate the owning of or trade in slaves. Their arguments were fairly typical. In regard to the Quakers' complicity in matters of slavery, they said: "This makes an ill report in all those countries of Europe, where they hear of [it], that the Quakers do here handle men like they handle there the cattle."³⁹ Appealing to the religious sentiments of their fellow countrymen, the Quakers pointed out that defense of slavery contradicted the fundamental principles of Christianity. The Germantown Quakers did not limit themselves merely to a moral condemnation of slavery. They openly recognized the slaves' right to armed struggle for their freedom. "Have these Negroes not as much right to fight for their freedom as you have to keep them slaves?"⁴⁰ the Quakers asked.

This was an encroachment on the holiest writ of slavery—a direct appeal, in fact, for the slaves to rebel.

As the revolutionary explosion in the colonies became more imminent, all the most important social currents of the time stepped up their activities, and this included, first of all, the Abolitionist movement. A pamphlet by a Boston judge, called "The Selling of Joseph", was published in 1700. The author, Samuel Sewall, made a detailed analysis of the Bible's most important positions and indisputably proved the complete groundlessness of arguments that the slavery of Blacks was divinely foreordained.

The Quakers hold a prominent place in the history of the American Abolitionist movement. They, along with a few other sects, deserve credit for being the first to oppose slavery, openly declare it incompatible with Christianity, and proclaim Blacks' right to freedom. The more radical members in Abolitionist circles even recognized Blacks' right to armed struggle for slavery's abolition. The movement of the Quakers and other sects opposing slavery set the ideological and political groundwork for the Abolitionist movement in the Revolutionary War period.

The movement against slavery by both black and white opponents existed even earlier, during colonization, as well, but it paled in comparison to the immediate pre-Revolutionary Abolitionist movement. That movement was not only better organized, but it was also ideologically and politically more succinctly formulated, based as it was on the bourgeois enlightenment. At this stage, the Abolitionist movement was an important part of the overall liberation movement in the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary periods of American history. The Abolitionists saw the liberation of the slaves as an integral part of the fight to rid North America of its colonial dependence. The Abolitionists' goal was not, however, achieved, and black slavery was not eliminated by the War for Independence. All the same, the Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary Abolitionist movement was of large significance in the history of the fight to eliminate slavery. It was at this time that the anti-slavery movement got its greatest impetus, leading to the eventual elimination of slavery in the United States. In this regard, a consideration of the basic aims of this movement in the pre-Revolutionary period is of significant interest in elucidating the alignment of forces in the colonies' struggle for their independence and in properly evalu-

ating the Abolitionist movement in the subsequent stages of its development.

The majority of the colonies' population was white. Whites held the ruling positions in the economy, monopolized governmental organs, and played the decisive role in politics and spiritual life. With this the case, any solution to the Negro problem would have to depend in large part on what position America's white population took on the issue. It must also be taken into account that even in the colonial period Blacks were a part of American society and any solution to their most basic problems, if not their very existence, would have to depend in great measure on how the white population reacted to them.

This reaction was determined first of all by economic factors. It is of import that the movement for the elimination of black slavery enjoyed no popularity among broad strata of the white population in the South. This was attributed to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the South's population was directly or indirectly linked to slaveholding and derived a material advantage from the exploitation of the black slaves. The Church, press, and social organizations came to slavery's defense in the South, and the marked pressure to any opposition to slavery by slave owners was also a serious hindrance to the development of Abolitionism in the southern colonies. Still, it was economic considerations which figured most prominently here.

It was not by historical chance that Abolitionism arose in the North and became a wide-reaching movement there. There was no economic basis for slavery there and a good portion of the inhabitants had no incentives to support this most cruel system of human exploitation. What is more, economic factors actually worked in outright contrary direction there. There were instances of planters hiring out black slaves who had the necessary qualifications to work in the burgeoning industrial and trade plants of the North. In such cases the slave became a serious competitor for the white worker, since he received far less pay than the white worker. On the one hand, this aroused keen anti-Negro sentiments among the Whites; on the other, the most aware white working people gradually came to realize that the problem was not with Blacks, but with slavery, which directly hit at the interests of America's entire work force. All of this furthered the gradual development of Aboli-

tionist sentiments among the North's white working masses, as well.

It is noteworthy that Abolitionist sentiments in the pre-war period were especially prevalent in Pennsylvania, which specialized in growing wheat and was considered the granary of the North American colonies. It was the most important center of free farming where slave labor was not used. It was in Pennsylvania that Benjamin Franklin, the outstanding leader of the American Revolution, carried on his Abolitionist activities.

The Abolitionist movement was born and grew to prominence in the ready anti-slaveholding conditions of the North. There, slavery represented a serious threat to the economic positions of a significant portion of the population, which was wary of competition with black-slave labor. The emergence of Abolitionism in the North was historically predictable, since the necessary economic and political conditions were to be found there.

The history of the emergence and development of this movement in the North is a cogent confirmation of a well-known truth whose essence states that socio-economic factors are the primary thing in the history of any country or people. Political, moral, and spiritual factors to a great degree derive from the socio-economic conditions of a society's development, though there is a fine dialectical interdependence between them. Their influence on one another becomes especially noticeable in times of revolution, which the history of England's North American colonies on the brink of their War for Independence graphically confirms.

The Abolitionist movement ran up against serious difficulties. Powerful forces interested in preserving and further entrenching slavery opposed the Abolitionists. England was making ever greater profits off the slave trade and the exploitation of slaves in her North American colonies, and so the English government supported slavery there in every way possible. In colonial times, slavery played a decisive role in the colonies' economy and active advocates of it were to be found in all the colonies, especially the southern ones.

Under such conditions, the Abolitionists were hard put to popularize their views or bring them to practical realization. An important moral factor which stimulated the Abolitionist movement's development was the active support it got from progressive figures throughout the world. Mankind's best minds came forward with sharp condemna-

tion of slavery in America and pointed out its immorality and inhumanity. The outstanding thinker Montesquieu devoted a special chapter in his famous work *The Spirit of the Laws* to the question "Of the Slavery of the Negroes". Montesquieu ironically wrote: "It is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians."⁴¹ There was a large measure of truth in this irony of the great thinker's. The racists of Montesquieu's time and those who came later really did not consider the black person a man.

This was an extremely common and firmly entrenched point of view. Herbert Aptheker writes that a racist from Delaware who lived through the revolutionary events of the 18th century, when asked "Why the Negroes were born slaves ... more than others?", gave the clear reply: "And may you not as well ask why the Buzzards are obliged to eat nothing but carrion?... Nature answers by saying it was necessary and therefore she has fitted them for it and made it their delight."⁴²

Striving to cover up the essence of slavery, its proponents in America and Europe did everything to make the so-called civilizing mission of the slave owners popular. They maintained that slavery was the only possible condition for Blacks, and a necessary one at that, since the slaves were being introduced to Western civilization on the plantations. It is worth noting that contemporary colonialists and neo-colonialists likewise construct their theories on these "arguments" of the 18th-century slave owners. Like their spiritual brothers, the American slave owners of the 18th century, they maintain that colonialism and neo-colonialism have a great positive influence on the peoples in colonies and semi-colonies, allowing them to get closer to the heights of Western civilization. The 18th-century slave owners with shocking cynicism would declare that slavery and the slave trade were a real boon to Blacks and to all of American society. Arguments favoring the American slave owner were cited with particular frequency in countries where serfdom still existed. The slave owners enjoyed a certain spiritual propinquity here regardless of what nuances existed between this or that particular system of slavery.

All of the military, economic, and political might of the British Empire, which had an economic concern in strengthening and expanding slavery, stood guard over it.

Negro slavery was an issue of legislation and was maintained by deeply-rooted racist traditions among the white population. A powerful punitive apparatus checked any attempts at slave uprisings, and runaway slaves were hunted down like wild animals everywhere throughout the colonies. A whole army of armed slave owners, overseers, and slave-drivers, as well as the militia and English colonial troops—in other words, the entire armed might of the colonies—stood watch over slaveholding interests. The Church, press, and social organizations—in short, all means of ideological influence—were put to good service for slavery's justification and defense. Slavery strengthened the British Empire's might, and gave rise to an enormous number of voracious minions to the slave owners who, totally unused to productive labor, were morally dissipated and cruel beyond mercy, and simply lived off slavery. It was the bourgeoisie, financiers, and merchants of the North as well as the South who reaped the bloody dividends off the trade and exploitation of slaves.

And, most importantly, slavery at this time was economically profitable. All the moral costs of cultivating this cruelest form of man's exploiting man were covered by the tremendous profits from the forced labor of black slaves. Profit was the principal motivation to nascent capitalism, and to make a profit it was willing to go to any criminal extremes. The capitalist predator was just starting to stand on his own at this time, was young, full of strength and energy, and was not about to let any moral factors get in the way of his pursuit of profit.

It seemed, then, that slavery was invincible and would continue indefinitely, with black slaves forever submitting to the slaughter to appease the golden calf, the foremost god of the easy profit.

But the dialectic of history is such that in time even the seemingly most invincible bastions protecting the positions of the exploiter classes tumble down. Internal contradictions pile up within the inner workings of antagonistic socio-economic formations, and these give vent to forces which explode those formations from within. This was the way social relations developed in colonial America, too. The number of colonists favoring the abolition of slavery on economic, political, and moral grounds kept on growing. These people, the best of their time, saved America's honor, conscience, and good name.

The Abolitionist movement was stimulated by the idea of shaking off British colonial rule, for it was not just coincidence that the movement became especially active right before and during the Revolutionary period. Abolitionist literature began to become fairly prolific on the eve of the Revolutionary War, and the incompatibility of the colonies' fight for liberation with the preservation of black slavery became a more and more strident issue. James Otis' "Rights of the British Colonies", published in 1764, set the problem out quite lucidly. Denouncing slavery, Otis urged Blacks to take up arms and fight for their freedom.

However, there were only a few Abolitionists who unconditionally acknowledged the right of Blacks to resist their owners by force of arms. Most took moderate positions, considering the emancipation of the slaves a lengthy and gradual process and that reform, and not armed uprising, is the main way to abolish slavery. Slavery's opponents saw the enlightenment and good will of the slave owner, who had to be convinced of the need to voluntarily liberate the slaves, as the prerequisites for slavery's elimination. The entire history of the anti-slavery movement in the US has convincingly demonstrated the wholly utopian nature of such a viewpoint.

A thousand years of world history is more than adequate evidence that in no country will the ruling exploiter class ever, even by force of the most eloquent remonstrances, voluntarily relinquish its possessions, especially when doing so would benefit the exploited class. The history of US slavery provides a most persuasive confirmation of this.

A true social revolution is unthinkable without the most active participation of the masses in the revolutionary struggle. Farmers, tradesmen, and workers in the burgeoning industrial plants took an active part in the American Revolution. It was the working people who provided the real motive force for the colonies' revolutionary war for independence against England. They had no incentive of an economic, political, ideological, or moral nature to come out in defense of slavery. Moreover, the great part of them represented the anti-slavery-minded population in the colonies. Their ready participation in the War for Independence gave it a revolutionary character and made its imprint on the development of the Abolitionist movement. The Revolution broadened support for Abolitionism by

greatly increasing the number of working people who got involved in the movement. The revolutionary struggle for independence armed Abolitionism with the same ideological and political slogans for liberation as the war used.

The Abolitionist movement before and during the war generally tended to a rather pronounced radical position. An ever larger number of Abolitionists spoke out in favor of abolishing slavery. In 1772, the Reverend Isaac Skillman published his "Oration upon the Beauties of Liberty"⁴³ which put forward the demand that the slaves be granted freedom immediately. "In this work," wrote Herbert Aptheker, "its author went as far as Abolitionist literature was ever to go, for he affirmed the slave's right to rebel since that would conform 'to the laws of nature'."⁴⁴ The ripening revolution squarely confronted the leaders of America's revolutionary movement with the necessity of defining their position on slavery and, even more acutely, on its most cynical and inhumane manifestation, the slave trade.

The Abolitionists were also forced to deal with the issue. Benjamin Rush's Address to the residents of the British colonies in America was published in 1773. Rush, taking up a materialistic position, attempted to prove the complete groundlessness of assertions that slavery was justified because of the racial inferiority of Blacks. The logical premise followed from this that slavery should be done away with and the rights of Blacks made equal to those of Whites. On the very eve of the Revolutionary War, members of the Continental Congress passed a decision known as "The American Association". This document said that as of December 1, 1774, the importation of slaves into the colonies and the trade in slaves anywhere in them were to be banned henceforth and for ever more.

This radical decision was made to a large degree because of the influence of Abolitionist circles, which had sharply stepped up their activity on the eve of the War for Independence. The real correlation of forces did not, however, allow this decision to be given the force of law. The Founding Fathers, linked to slavery by a myriad different connections, became frightened at their own radicalism and beat a retreat. They did not risk inserting this decision either in the Declaration of Independence or in the Constitution. Nevertheless, though, "The American Association" was a document of great importance. The Congress' decision struck a crushing blow at the English monopoly on the

slave trade and helped stimulate the Abolitionists' fight for a ban on trading in slaves and on slavery itself.

The term "Abolitionism" has different shades of meaning. If it is to be interpreted broadly as a diverse movement for the elimination of black slavery, then it must be made perfectly clear that it was black slaves themselves who played the principal role in the Abolitionist movement at all stages of its development. Their struggle took on the most varied forms: fleeing from slavery, the destruction of labor tools and crops, self-mutilation, faking illness, and setting back the pace of work in every way possible. However, the principal form the black slaves' struggle took was armed uprising. William Foster was absolutely correct to stress that "the highest form of resistance was the insurrection".⁴⁵

Abolitionism provided many outstanding figures of the American Revolution with good schooling. The first article by Thomas Paine, the eminent ideologist and revolutionary, was entitled, characteristically enough, "African Slavery in America"⁴⁶ and appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper of March 8, 1775. Paine called for Americans to rise up in arms against the king who was spreading black slavery, the gravest kind of crime against a person. The author not only demanded slavery's abolition, but even thought it obligatory to provide the liberated slaves with land so as to give their liberation economic support.

Paine called the slave owners robbers and declared that "the slave, who is the proper owner of his freedom, has a right to reclaim it". In 1778, Paine emphasized: "I consider freedom as personal property." He saw no conflict in the colonies between the individual's interests and the interests of society. "Public good," he insisted, "is not a term opposed to the good of individuals. On the contrary, it is the good of every individual collected. It is the good of all, because it is the good of every one."⁴⁷

Benjamin Franklin, Anthony Benezet, Benjamin Rush, and other opponents of slavery began getting involved in Abolitionism before the Revolution. Benjamin Franklin's activities in this area are of particular interest. Franklin, an outstanding statesman, politician, and scientist, one of the greatest leaders of the American Revolution, was also a great humanist who was a confirmed opponent of slavery. His views on the issue are distinguished by considerably more democratism than is to be found in the views of other of the United States' Founding Fathers. His repeated de-

mands that this shameful system for enslaving human beings be abolished reflected the positions held by a great many Abolitionists. Not only was Franklin the American Revolution's outstanding statesman and politician, he was also one of its principal ideologists. A close look at Franklin's position on the problem will consequently allow us to understand many of its important aspects and get an idea of its significance for the Revolution.

Franklin was a confirmed enemy of racism in all its manifestations and naturally did not just oppose the enslavement of black Americans, but also demanded that the annihilation of the Indians be put to an end. American capitalism's treatment of the Indians and Afro-Americans constitutes its two most dreadful crimes against humanity. Franklin's arguments for the Indians and for Afro-Americans had much in common, just as there was much in common in their two very grievous fates. It therefore seems logical for us to consider Franklin's views on native Americans. The inquisitive mind sought to give a lucid scientific explanation to everything that he had occasion to encounter. His appreciation of the Indian problem and the reasons for its exceptionally acute nature in colonial America, together with his observation on the way the Indian tribes lived, have lost none of their importance nowadays, either.

Franklin the humanist was firmly convinced that racism and the division of peoples into the chosen and the second-rate was a manifestation of extreme reaction and callous, misplaced nationalism. The gist of Franklin's views on these topics is to be found in his "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America,"⁴⁸ which he begins by categorically discrediting the racist term "savage", so common at the time. He wrote: "Savages we call them, because their manners differ from ours, which we think the perfection of civility; they think the same of theirs."

He further said that were one to look at the manners of different nations impartially, it would become evident that there are "neither crude" nor "well bred" peoples, and that all peoples have elements of both regardless of the level of their cultural development. Each nation's view of cultural level is determined by whatever particular conditions prevail in that nation, Franklin pointed out, and cited a curious fact. Several Indian youths went through colleges in the northern provinces, and when they rejoined their fellow tribesmen, the latter were not at all enraptured by

what they had learned. The Indians said that the youths were "bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing". After such an unflattering evaluation of the results of the Indian youths' education in white colleges, the Indians were magnanimous enough to show the Whites what real education was. "If the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them."

Franklin's point was that, unlike Europeans who were so conceited about how civilized they were, the Indians were benevolent, polite, and respectful of one another. Whenever the Indians gathered for a meeting, whoever was speaking would stand up, and his listeners would strictly observe silence. When the speaker had finished and sat down, no one would say anything for five or six minutes so that the fellow who had just spoken could gather his thoughts again. If in this time he thought of something else to add to what he had already said, he could get up and say it. The Indians considered it very rude to interrupt another person even in the course of ordinary conversation.

Franklin compared these Indian traditions to the rules of conduct in the British House of Commons, with which he had the opportunity to become rather well acquainted after living in London for many years. "How different this is," he wrote, "from the conduct of a polite British House of Commons, where scarce a day passes without some confusion, that makes the speaker hoarse in calling to order."

Franklin made the rounds of many salons in his time, including the most fashionable ones. He knew what he was talking about when he compared a traditional Indian conversation with the manner of conducting a worldly conversation in one of these salons: "How different from the mode of conversation in many polite companies of Europe, where, if you do not deliver your sentence with great rapidity, you are cut off in the middle of it by the impatient loquacity of those you converse with, and never suffered to finish it!"

When an Indian would show up among white people, a crowd of curious on-lookers would immediately gather around him, making no bones about looking him over.

But if a white person came into an Indian settlement, the Indians would hide in bushes to look at him so as not to embarrass him by their excessive curiosity.

Franklin admired the traditional hospitality of the Indians, who greeted outsiders with exceptional cordiality and attention. Each Indian settlement had its "outsiders' house", where strangers who had come into the village were lodged. As soon as they learned of some stranger's arrival, each person would bring what he could: food, an animal hide, tobacco, and so on. As soon as the guest had eaten and rested up, pipes were brought in and discussion begun. This usually ended with an offer of any needed services. The guest was offered anything he might need to continue his journey and without any stipulation for recompense.

Franklin contrasted this traditional hospitality of the Indians to the white man's niggardliness. The white person would help out only in return for something else, and even then not always. He cited the words of an Indian: "If a white man, in travelling through our country, enters one of our cabins ... we dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, and give him meat and drink, that he may allay his thirst and hunger; and we spread soft furs for him to rest and sleep on; we demand nothing in return. But, if I go into a white man's house at Albany, and ask for victuals and drink, they say, 'Where is your money?' and if I have none, they say, 'Get out, you Indian dog.'"⁴⁹

In the 1750s, Franklin was named Pennsylvania's plenipotentiary to a commission conducting peace negotiations with the Indians. He told about his experience on this commission and the results of his other observations in his "Remarks on a Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs",⁵⁰ which he wrote from 1765 to 1766.

In this work, Franklin opposes any interference by the government in commerce between Whites and Indians, in particular, the imposition of tariffs on furs sold by the Indians. He considered the plan to be of no avail, since it was unrealizable in practice: it would be impossible to establish any sort of effective control throughout the enormous territory of the colonies over the implementation of decisions regulating this trade.

Franklin was decidedly against selling the Indians alcoholic beverages, since the sellers generally swindled them and gave no regard to the fact that alcohol ruined their health and made their annihilation easier. Nevertheless, in

his "Remarks" Franklin opposed banning the sale of rum to them, since he thought that "the proposed prohibition will therefore be a great encouragement to unlicensed traders, and promote such trade".⁵¹

This was a worthy consideration, too, as the later introduction of dry laws in many countries, including the United States, was to show. Prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages is not an effective means of combatting drunkenness—it merely diverts the sale of alcohol to illegal sellers. This in turn leads to a considerable drain on the financial resources of the populace and to bootleggers getting rich off illegal sales.

Franklin did not idealize the Indians' primitive communal structure, but he was quite in admiration of the Iroquois federation and of the democratism inherent to the Indians. He pointed out that the Indians had "no prisons, no officers to compel obedience, or inflict punishment".⁵²

From the colonial period right up to the present day the Negro problem has been of great importance in US history. America's finest people have always been resolutely opposed to the shameful institution of slavery and its natural consequence—racial discrimination. One's position on the Negro problem has always been the most important criterion for defining an American politician's views and degree of democratism. Franklin, as a humanist and progressive, would predictably not have been able to react in any but a negative fashion to the terribly cruel terrorist regime created for black slaves in colonial America.

The plantations of the South were slavery's economic foundation. It would be incorrect to think, however, that it was only the plantation owners and the vast parasitic layer of their minions—the overseers, slave-drivers, guards, and so on—who had an economic interest in slavery. Merchants, manufacturers, and bankers in the North with close ties to the South's plantation economy also made enormous profits off the exploitation of the slaves. One should also bear in mind that slavery was legal in all 13 of the colonies right up until the Revolutionary War.

Franklin spent nearly all of his adulthood in Pennsylvania, where Abolitionist sentiments were especially keen. Even there, though, a certain number of slaves were used in the work force, albeit the overwhelming majority of the 10,000 slaves there found employment as domestic servants. Even those with Abolitionist leanings had slaves in their

domestic service, and this was not only in deference to tradition, but was also in large part an economic necessity. As a rule, there was a chronic shortage of workers in the colonies, and finding a white servant was at times next to impossible. It is interesting to note that even Franklin himself, for all his Abolitionist rhetoric, hired black servants when his family's material circumstance finally allowed for this.

One needed extraordinary personal courage to advocate the abolition of slavery when the most well-to-do and influential segment of society was making a profit off slavery or was using Blacks as domestic servants, and the metastases of racism permeated all of society. It should also be taken into consideration that all through his long career as statesman and politician Franklin never lost close contact with his colleagues from the southern provinces. His Abolitionist statements caused Franklin all kinds of serious problems in his relations with Southerners, but he never would bargain with his conscience and remained true to the ideals of Abolitionism to his dying day.

Franklin was an outstanding economist in his time, his labors in political economy receiving the high esteem of Marx. It was he, before anyone else in America, who understood that slave labor is non-productive and, consequently, unprofitable. He knew his fellow countrymen as enterprising, business-like people and evidently for this reason appealed more to their economic interests rather than to moral considerations. Economic interests were probably first in line because he had all too good an idea of the moral foundations of American slave owners and did not estimate them too highly.

Franklin was devastating in his portrayal of the slave owners. In his "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America", he dispelled the illusions of simple-minded folk who believed America to be a "paradise of fools" where the "streets are said to be paved with half-peck loaves, the houses are tiled with pancakes, and where the fowls fly about ready roasted, crying, *Come, eat me!*" Franklin wrote that whoever might come to America ought to be prepared for the fact that he was coming to a land of slavery. Of slave owners he scathingly wrote: "They are pleased with the observation of a Negro, and frequently mention it, that Boccarora (meaning the white man) *make de black man workee, make de horse workee, make de ox workee, make ebery*

ting workee; only de hog. He, de hog, no workee; he eat, he drink, he walk about, he go to sleep when he please, he live like a gempleman."⁵³ The comparison of the slave owner to a hog and, worse yet, done by a Black, was a mortal insult for the entire clan of slave owners, but it was a fair one. A man of exceptional industriousness, Franklin was of the opinion that, by prospering from slave labor, the planters completely shut themselves off from creative activity and, as a consequence, became degraded and morally dissipated, and he could not see why this kind of tenor of life should be allowed to exist.

The American Revolution did away with slavery only in the North. In the South, the Revolution, by giving industry, including the textile industry, a powerful boost, thereby created the economic prerequisites for the swift development of the plantations and, consequently, slavery. The efforts of Franklin and other progressive leaders of the American Revolution to bring about slavery's complete abolition were not to succeed. But Franklin did believe in slavery's inevitable demise, which is why he created The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the purpose of which was to liberate the slaves. In the last years of his life, even though crushed by dire illness, he still found both time and strength to guide the Society's work and act as its president.

Believing slavery would eventually be abolished, Franklin gave thought to how the liberated slaves could best be integrated into American society. This was no idle question or the illusions of an elderly dreamer. Nearly a century later, after slavery had been done away with in the tumultuous and bloody Civil War of 1861-1865, the problem of what to do with the liberated slaves truly became a most serious social, economic, political, and moral problem.

On November 9, 1789, shortly before his death, in "An Address to the Public", Franklin wrote on behalf of The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery: "Slavery is such an atrocious debasement of human nature, that its very extirpation, if not performed with solicitous care, may sometimes open a source of serious evils. The unhappy man, who has long been treated as a brute animal, too frequently sinks beneath the common standard of the human species. The galling chains, that bind his body, do also fetter his intellectual faculties, and impair the social affections of his heart."⁵⁴

Franklin wrote that a system of measures would have to be carefully thought out so that the slaves' emancipation would not be formal in nature, as it in fact was in 1863. He sought to prove the need for Blacks to get economic and political rights equal to those of Whites so as to become full-fledged members of American society. In his "Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks", Franklin wrote that after the freeing of the slaves it would be necessary to create "a Committee of Inspection, who shall superintend the morals, general conduct, and ordinary situation of the free Negroes, and afford them advice and instruction, protection from wrongs, and other friendly offices".⁵⁵ It is characteristic that, after the emancipation of the Blacks, a "Committee of Guardians" was created to carry out just those tasks Franklin wrote about. Franklin pointed to the need for creating the necessary conditions for the emancipated slaves to "learn some trade or other business of subsistence".⁵⁶

Franklin, the great enlightener, understood that once having cast off the chains of slavery, the Negroes would be eager to get not only a crust of bread, but knowledge as well, as they would have a great longing for learning. He suggested taking whatever measures necessary for liberated slaves, and their children first of all, to have the opportunity to be schooled. He gave special attention to the need for guaranteeing the freed Blacks work, "as the want of this would occasion poverty, idleness, and many vicious habits".⁵⁷

He predicted with amazing perspicacity all the problems which the emancipated black slaves and American society as a whole would encounter. Franklin's humanism clearly showed as well in the fact that, long before the emancipation of slaves, he had worked out a comprehensive program for solving these most complex socio-economic and political problems which slavery's abolition would give rise to.

His statements in defense of American Blacks had great political significance. One of the first American Abolitionists, Franklin's energies in this direction mobilized the public to the struggle for the liberation of the slaves, and in subsequent years were an effective practical aid to new generations of Abolitionists who studied his works devoted to the Afro-American problem and his practical activities related to Abolitionism.

The entry on Franklin in an American encyclopaedia says: "His last public act was the signing of a memorial to Congress on the subject of slavery by the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania, of which he was the founder and president."⁵⁸

On February 12, 1789, Franklin introduced a motion for the repeal of the slave trade into the US House of Representatives. Slave owners and anyone else supporting slavery were perfectly aware that passage of this motion would be the prologue to the collapse of the entire system of slavery and, therefore, right-wingers in Congress gave Franklin's proposal a very hostile reception and ensured its failure. Mr. Jackson of Georgia, the representative of the slave owners, was particularly virulent in his opposition to Franklin's motion. Franklin put the speech of this fanatical champion of slavery into the mouth of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a character in a parody he concocted who, in speaking in the Divan of Algiers, argues the legality of the Algerians' enslavement of the Christians.⁵⁹

Franklin frequently made successful use of satire in his struggle against slavery. Nearing death, Franklin suffered terribly, his bouts of illness sometimes being so severe as to cause him to lose consciousness. In spite of his grave condition, the dying Franklin inflicted a last blow on slavery with his biting satire. On March 24, 1790, just 25 days before his death, he wrote "On the Slave-Trade", a parody fable. It was published the next day in the *Federal Gazette* and was the last thing he wrote.

Franklin's humanism was manifested not only in the fact that he came to the defense of Blacks and Indians, America's pariahs, with all the means at his disposal. He did not understand the class nature of American society. Idealizing the capitalist mode of production, he treated many of the problems of his time from an idealistic viewpoint. But having emerged from the ranks of the people himself and worked for his bread since the age of twelve, Franklin saw in labor a means of ennobling people, and could not help but feel sympathy for all America's working people, including the black slaves.

Franklin dreamed of a time when all parasites and good-for-nothings would disappear and all members of society would become engaged in productive labor. He even calculated that, after this, it would be possible to cut citizens' work days to four hours. This, of course, was a utopia.

The work day under capitalism cannot be cut to four hours even now, when the development of productive forces has reached phenomenal dimensions by comparison to the 18th century. Capitalism's exploiter essence is an insurmountable obstacle to any such radical solution to the length of the work day problem. But the very fact that Franklin raised this question and tried to solve it is persuasive evidence of his humanism and concern for the interests of simple laborers.

Black Americans made an enormous contribution to the struggle against slavery, which cannot be emphasized enough, considering how very crudely bourgeois historians have falsified the history of black Americans. They maintain that both the slaves and free black Americans are an inert, weak-willed mass of people, ready to obey any outside pressure and utterly incapable of independent historical creativity. Repudiating such assertions restores historical justice and unmasks the racist essence in the positions of reactionary American historians who would try to prove that black Americans were passive spectators in the fierce fight for the abolition of slavery and it was only the good will of the Whites that gave them their freedom. "The American Negroes," wrote one such historian as recently as 1928, "are the only people in history who became free without any effort on their own behalf."⁶⁰ Other crude falsifications similar to this are common.

The history of colonial America alone shows the complete groundlessness of assertions about the Blacks' being docile in their slavery. They were in no way passive witnesses of the revolutionary events which unfolded. Their contribution to the common cause of abolishing English colonial rule and gaining their own emancipation from slavery was all the more meaningful, since the overwhelming majority of the black population was downtrodden, illiterate, and fettered to slavery.

In defining the part and place of the Negro problem in the War for Independence, William Foster wrote: "Objectively, the Revolution of 1776 was faced with the abolition of chattel slavery as one of its central tasks. This was because the building of capitalism in the United States, which was the fundamental process being advanced by the Revolution, could not be achieved on the basis of a slave labor system."⁶¹

The entire course of the revolutionary struggle's develop-

ment frustrated the attempts of the planters and reactionary bourgeoisie not to allow the participation of the Blacks in the revolutionary movement, especially under the slogan of slavery's liquidation. In the colonial period, the forms of struggle by Blacks against slavery greatly varied. One of these typical forms was presenting petitions to officials and courts demanding the abolition of slavery.

This was a rather complicated affair for Blacks, not only because it elicited a highly negative reaction from white conservatives (frequently the petitions were answered by harsh repressions from the slave owners). One must also keep in mind that nearly 99 percent of the Black population was illiterate and therefore unable to write such petitions. Aside from this, petitions were allowed to be presented only in the Northern colonies, thus sharply restricting their overall scope.

It must be said that the individual protests and complaints by Blacks against the tyranny of their masters were rather common over the whole of the colonial period. It was only during the Revolutionary War and the immediate pre-war years, though, that the serving of petitions became widespread throughout the colonies. In addition, it was usual at this time to make not individual complaints, but rather collective protests demanding the abolition of slavery and the creation of conditions needed for Blacks to live. The petition campaigns before and during the war had much in common. They were, to a great extent, one continuous process, and so it is expedient to look at their development over the entire period before and during the war.

In April 1773, a group of Blacks appealed to the Massachusetts General Court with a petition asking for "the possibility of earning money with which to purchase freedom".⁶² The underlying demand of practically all the petitions was the granting of freedom to the slaves. This demand was gradually fleshed out with specific socio-economic and political points. The petitioners posed the questions, under what conditions can the slaves be freed? And on what material resources will the liberated slaves live?

The great majority of the slaves were tied to agricultural production. The Blacks saw their only means for earning a living in the working of the land, and so it was entirely natural that in most of their petitions they suggested different kinds of conditions which would guarantee them some land.

In July 1773, Massachusetts Blacks went to court with a new petition which brought up the need for granting a piece of land to each liberated slave. The Blacks proposed the most varied solutions to the agrarian question. In one of the petitions "they asked ... for 'some part of the unimproved land, belonging to the province, for a settlement, that each of us may there sit down quietly under his own fig tree'".⁶³

Their activity in the colonies' war for liberation from English colonial rule led to the increasing self-awareness of Blacks. They became more and more determined in their demand for rights equal to those of the white colonists. This demand was reflected in numerous petitions they sent to the appropriate authorities. The petitioners emphasized with good reason that the struggle for independence and the struggle for the abolition of slavery were indissolubly linked. "We expect great things from men who have made such a noble stand against the designs of their *fellow-men* to enslave them."⁶⁴

A petition in 1779 to the New Hampshire state assembly declared that "the God of Nature gave them [the Blacks—*R. I.*] life and freedom upon the terms of the most perfect equality with other men".⁶⁵ Another petition, directed to the General Assembly of Connecticut in 1779, asserted that "we are endowed with the same Faculties as our Masters" and demanded to know if it was "consistent with the present laws of the United States to hold so many thousands of the Race of Adam, our common Father, in perpetual slavery".⁶⁶ The petitioners pointed out the incompatibility of revolutionary slogans with the slavery of hundreds of thousands of Blacks in America. Addressing the country's leaders, they bitterly declared that Blacks were the only people on earth without either property, wives, children, cities, or a country.

A characteristic pattern may be traced in the history of American black people: they made progress in the struggle for their rights only when they were able to join forces with white opponents of slavery and racial discrimination. In the colonial period, there were no objective prerequisites, of an economic nature first and foremost, for creating a united front between black and white opponents of slavery. It was this that, in the final analysis, destined their struggle to failure at that time. Slavery remained intact in colonial America.

American Marxist historians have made an important contribution to the study of the various forms of resistance by black slaves. Herbert Aptheker, in particular, did much painstaking work gathering records, scattered in all different kinds of sources, of the numerous uprisings and plots aimed against slavery. Their description takes up many hundreds of pages in his fundamental works. He cites numerous pieces of documented evidence that Blacks organized many uprisings and plots on the eve of the Revolutionary War and during the war itself.⁶⁷

In reactionary American bourgeois historical literature, the opinion is widely held that, as a whole, Blacks were docile and that their struggle against slavery was the exception rather than the rule. The facts indicate otherwise. During the Revolutionary War, the American press, especially in the South, published much information about uprisings, plots, fugitive slaves, and other forms of protests used by Blacks in the fight for their freedom. "To say, as many bourgeois writers have done, that the Negroes tamely submitted to the terrible subjugation of slavery," William Foster writes, "is an outrageous distortion of reality and a burning insult to the Negro people."⁶⁸

To maintain that the Blacks docilely submitted to the slave owners is to ignore the laws of the class struggle and the most important patterns in the development of antagonistic socio-economic formations. These patterns boil down to the fact that at all stages of man's history enslaved masses have fought for their freedom in every way possible, and black Americans were in no way an exception.

Africa's indigenous population put up fierce armed resistance to the foreign invaders who were hunting for slaves. History has recorded numerous instances of uprisings on the slave ships. The real battlefield for the freedom of American Blacks, though, were slave plantations in the South.

Aside from the above-mentioned forms of fighting for their freedom, Blacks resorted to other means of protest against slavery, such as suicide, feigning illness, refusal to have children, setting the plantations on fire, murder of plantation owners and their guards and overseers, etc. All through the colonial period, numerous fugitive slave groups would gather in hard-to-get-to places. Indians would often offer them food and shelter. It is noteworthy that, during their frequent raids on plantations and cities, the

Indians would often kill off the entire white population but almost always leave the Blacks untouched. This was characteristic solidarity between the two most oppressed groups in North America.

Slaves in the South, who worked mainly on the plantations, were the worst off. It is natural, therefore, that southern plantations were where most uprisings took place. The armed slave uprising of 1739 in South Carolina was especially important in the history of the black anti-slavery movement. It covered a large area and frightened all the slave owners in it, but was ruthlessly put down.

Certain bourgeois historians idealize the position of slaves in the northern colonies, asserting that there were no economic incentives in the North for the supercruel exploitation of black slaves. The conclusion is correspondingly reached that slaves in the North had no reasons for actively opposing the slave owners. While not denying a definite difference in the positions of slaves in the North and the South, it must be stressed that a slave was still a slave in the North, with all attendant consequences. We know that there, too, slave uprisings flared up many times and were put down with methods just as cruel and barbaric as those used in the South.

The biggest uprising in the colonial period took place in New York City in 1712. It was crushed: "Twenty-one slaves were executed and since the law of 1708 permitted any kind of punishment for this offense ... some were burnt, others hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains in the town."⁶⁹

The coming Revolution activated the struggle against slavery in the North as well as the South. One Negro plot was uncovered in Boston in September 1774. Its participants were subject to harsh punishment. In this connection, Abigail Adams, wife of revolutionary John Adams, told her husband: "It always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have."⁷⁰ This sums up the crux of the problem well. The white bourgeoisie and slave owners demanded freedom and self-rule for themselves, but were determined to keep every fifth inhabitant of the colonies in the chains of slavery.

The Revolutionary Situation

Was there any chance of averting the war between Britain and her North American colonies? Was it an historical necessity to break a chip off the vase, as Benjamin Franklin termed the separation of the colonies from England?⁷¹ Did the war suit the fundamental interests of the English and the colonists? Questions such as these are being debated even today, more than 200 years after the war's end, by historians of various schools of thought.

In this connection, it must be stressed that great revolutions (and the American Revolution of 1775-1783 unquestionably numbers among them) are brought about by deep-seated socio-economic and political contradictions whose antagonistic nature makes a revolutionary explosion inevitable. The American Revolution was made possible by the entire course of economic, political, and spiritual development in England's North American colonies. The Revolutionary War was not just a local conflict, it was a first devastating blow to the world colonial system of the 18th century and had great repercussions, first of all for countries in the Western Hemisphere. The war of 1775-1783 opened the era of revolutionary, anti-colonial, liberation wars there. "These national colonial liberation revolutions took place in several stages and embraced all the major continental colonies of England, France, Spain, and Portugal... Taken together, they were by far the broadest revolutionary movement the world had known up to that period."⁷²

England's 13 North American colonies were rather unique and differed from her extensive holdings in Asia and Africa and from the colonies of other European states. The vast majority of the population in the North American colonies came from Britain or other European countries, while in most other colonies the native population predominated. This was one of the main reasons that Britain's North American Empire did not last long.

The white colonists were sufficiently developed spiritually and politically to have the chance to effectively fight for the downfall of colonial dependence. The level of the colonies' economic development was such that they could wage a successful war against English colonial rule.

The economy was the first area where conditions for a revolutionary explosion in the colonies had sufficiently matured. Whites were in the overwhelming majority, as

mentioned above, but a colony is a colony and skin color in principle never has played any part in determining an object of exploitation for the bourgeoisie. The history of colonial America proves this. The inexorable laws determining colonial politics in the mother country regulated all details in England's relations with its 13 North American colonies here, too.

All goods made in the colonies were shipped to England at artificially low prices while, at the same time, goods entering America from England were sold at the highest prices possible. This was the 18th century's peculiar non-equivalent exchange, placing the colonies in the role of Britain's economic appendage. Poverty and the economic, cultural, and spiritual degradation of the great majority of the colonies' population were the inevitable consequences. Strict discriminatory regulations in economic relations between the colonies and the mother country were introduced. From 1660, the economic life of the colonies was controlled by the Council of Foreign Plantations, which became the Board of Trade in 1696.

The main aim of this body was to pump as many profits out of the trans-oceanic holdings as possible, at the same time nipping in the bud all attempts by the rich American provinces to compete with the mother country. Many laws and regulations passed on the Board's initiative pursued these goals. The Navigation Acts of 1660-1663 were issued giving England a monopoly on tobacco, rice, indigo, and other tropical crops which were much in demand in Europe. The Act of 1699 was passed, prohibiting the shipment of wool from one colony to another, to protect the English wool-growers. The Act of 1733, designed to force the importation of sugar and molasses only from the British West Indies, and the Act of 1750, forbidding the construction of iron-works in the colonies, were passed. The Board persisted in wiping out all colonial legislation and practices facilitating the growth of American commerce and industry.⁷³

The main conduits for policy transfer from the mother country to the colonies were English-appointed governors and judges and an enormous voracious and corrupt army of clerks who answered only to London. But England ran up against serious difficulties in governing its possessions across the ocean. The principal obstacle was the rapidly growing economic might of the colonies. The discriminatory economic decisions of His Majesty's government could by no means

always be put into effect. The colonies were so far away and their bourgeoisie was gathering strength so swiftly that insurmountable barriers were often created on the path to carrying out London's decisions. The trade, financial, and industrial bourgeoisie in America opposed these discriminatory decisions in every way possible, doing everything they could for the development of local industry, crafts, and trade. As their economic positions became solidified, the bourgeoisie in the colonies more and more strengthened the self-rule of the local authorities.

Opposition by the bourgeoisie and the planters to Britain grew parallel to their economic consolidation. The political alliance of the planter-bourgeois leadership developed and became an important component in creating the revolutionary situation in the colonies. The peculiarity of England's North American colonies lay in the fact that the white colonists, exploited by the British crown, in turn oppressed black and white slaves and the native Indian population in the cruelest way possible. The colonies developed in a multi-staged manner under highly acute class contradictions aggravated by racial, national, and religious conflicts.

Acute class contradictions, largely linked to the highly complex class structure of American society in the latter half of the 18th century, provided the conditions for the liberation movement in the colonies. This made its impress on the development of the revolutionary situation in the colonies and gave it an intricate and contradictory character.

Indian tribes on various levels of primitive-communal society inhabited the territory of the 13 North American colonies. Slaves and free Blacks made up 20 percent of the population, and the forced labor of white indentured servants, whose number may only be estimated, continued to be used.

The white population was a highly complex conglomerate of persons of different property and social status. Free farmers, agricultural workers without any rights, craftsmen, factory workers, retail and wholesale merchants, the bourgeoisie, landlords, the planters and the huge number of their armed minions—these were the basic classes and population groups in the colonies.

It was this social structure, complicated by the broad development of slaveholding relations, that gave rise to a most acute interweaving of economic, political, and moral problems. The anti-colonial movement in North America

thus grew unavoidably into not only a struggle for national liberation, but also into a Civil War between opponents and supporters of the mother country. This, too, gave a certain uniqueness to the development of the revolutionary situation in the colonies and, later, to the course of their Revolutionary War for Independence.

The economic and socio-political prerequisites for the Revolutionary War ripened over a period of many decades. But as often happens on the eve of great revolutionary upheavals, the culmination comes from one event which acts as a catalyst for the revolutionary explosion.

It was the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763 which accelerated the events in North America and became a crucial landmark thereby in the development of revolutionary situation. This war was a kind of world war of the 18th century in which the great powers of Europe fought in an enormous theater of military actions covering America as well as Europe.

The vast expanses of North America became the battlefield for England and France, the two great colonial powers, with the main prize being supremacy on the North American continent. France was defeated in this conflict and lost Canada, its huge North American colony, which was consequently joined onto Britain's other colonies there.

The Seven Years' War was the result of a long, stubborn, and bloody competition between England and France in which England gained a decisive victory and, it would seem, had good reasons for celebrating. The dream of English expansionists had been realized: they now had the enormous territories of Canada which they had been enviously eyeing for decades. The war ended the repartitioning of colonial possessions in North America, and it seemed that England would now assert its complete supremacy for many years to come over the North American continent.

However, a truth whose justness has been confirmed many times over by history became obvious as soon as the Seven Years' War ended: wars, even successful ones, are not the best way to resolve complex territorial, social, economic, and political problems. England had won the war and added new vast territories to its holdings, but she had in no way thereby consolidated her positions, and soon was to lose her 13 colonies.

The Seven Years' War promoted the rapid growth of self-awareness in the colonies' white population, for whom the

war had posed a new problem: how to protect their vast territory from invasion by French armed forces. The growth of self-awareness in a colony's population led to the activation of the struggle for the elimination of colonial dependence. Political self-awareness within the masses is likewise one of the prime conditions for a revolutionary situation to develop. The war sharply strengthened the liberation movement in the colonies by revealing with particular graphicness the predatory nature of English colonialism and, at the same time, its utter inability to resolve problems of vital importance to the colonists.

England did plunder her American colonies without a blush, pumping tremendous material values out of them. She was, however, unable to protect them from French invasion, since she had thrown the great majority of her armed forces into the European theater of war.

The entire burden of military actions against the French and their Indian allies lay on the colonists. A militia and standing army were created to contend with the French. They both played an important part in turning back the French invasion. Many prominent figures of the American Revolution participated in the military actions of the Seven Years' War, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. When the war was over, the question logically arose of whether or not to use the successful experience of military actions against the French for deciding the main problem confronting the colonists—the elimination of English colonial rule and the gaining of independence by the colonies.

Another peculiarity of the revolutionary situation in the colonies was that it developed during military operations. It is important to point out that the Seven Years' War was not only waged on American soil, but large numbers of colonists were drawn into it, including, of course, the future Founding Fathers of the United States. All this could not but leave its impress on the development of the revolutionary situation and cause serious socio-political changes in the colonies. These changes were an important component in the growing revolutionary tension and acted as a powerful catalyst for the development of the revolutionary situation.

The military experience and knowledge the colonists acquired during the Seven Years' War were widely used in their subsequent armed struggle against the English in the Revolutionary War of 1775-1783.

After the Seven Years' War was over, England sharply expanded its economic control in the colonies and consolidated its harsh colonial regime there. London feared the rapid rise in colonial trade and economics which was taking place in spite of all the discriminatory measures the English colonial apparatus took toward local merchants and industrialists.

As colonial trade, crafts, and industry developed, the colonies began conducting their policies more and more independently of London. This became especially evident after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, and London saw that the time had come to pursue a stricter policy toward the North American planters and bourgeoisie who were gaining strength. In addition, the Seven Years' War had made a considerable deficit in the English budget, and so, to replenish its coffers, London decided to sharply increase its exploitation of the American colonies. This was how the crown "thanked" the colonists for their selfless fight against the French in the war.

The intensification of colonial oppression elicited sharp opposition from all strata of the population in the colonies, widening the base for an anti-English front supported by the majority of the population. The considerable increase in English economic expansion struck not only at the class interests of the more well-to-do, it simultaneously was a severe blow to the material well-being of the majority of colonists. It was an even more substantial negative factor for large numbers of the working population, which was under the double yoke of exploitation by London and by the powers that be in the colonies. The latter attempted to transfer the costs of London's "new" economic course to the broad masses of the colonies' working people. They increased their exploitation of Blacks, farmers, craftsmen and workers even more.

Thus, Britain's economic expansion in the colonies not only set the "uppermost" colonists—the bourgeoisie, traders, and plantation owners—against the crown, it created a genuine crisis at the same time with the "lower" colonists, sharply bringing down their material well-being and inciting large numbers of them to fight against British tyranny.

London believed that colonial opposition could be crushed only by striking at the same time in the economic, political, and military spheres. It was for this reason that England's economic expansion was accompanied by a concerted attack

on the already limited right of the colonists to govern themselves. The English government did not restrict itself to administrative measures either, and soon turned to that means which all colonizers eventually resort to in putting down liberation movements: English troops were brought into the colonies. Their arrival confirmed how serious the situation in the colonies had become and also the fact that the British elite was no longer able to govern the colonies as it used to.

One of the most important measures aimed at heading off the anti-English movement in the colonies was London's decision of October 1763 to prohibit any colonists from settling beyond the Appalachian Mountains. This deprived the colonists of the opportunity of occupying the rich virgin lands there, which a rather large flow of settlers was by that time hoping to do.⁷⁴

The decision was aimed not only at land speculators, but also hit hard at the economic interests of much of the rest of American society. In prohibiting resettling across the Appalachians, the English government was attempting to bring the squatter movement into the narrow framework of administrative regulation. The squatters were taking over huge tracts of "free" lands—"free" only in the understanding of the white colonists and English colonial authorities. In fact, they belonged to the Indians, although neither London nor ruling circles in the colonies were going to take any consideration of that. On that matter, the white colonists and the English colonizers were in full accord.

The settling of new lands was accompanied by the cold-blooded annihilation of the Indians. This was nothing new. Earlier in America's colonization the "civilized" colonizers did not stop short of the most barbaric methods of physically exterminating the native population. This was a genocidal act of grandiose dimensions to which it would be hard to find an equal in the bloody chronicles of capitalist colonization of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and America. What's more, this was all done under the guise that it was necessary as a part of the Whites' mission to "civilize" the red-skins. And once again, just as it had done with the slave trade and the cruel exploitation of black slaves, the Church sanctified this crime against humanity with all its authority.

The revolutionary movement against Great Britain was an event whose importance transcended the colonies themselves and even the Western Hemisphere. America's Revolu-

tionary War had truly international significance. Being revolutionary in relation to England, this movement was, however, arch-reactionary in relation to the Indians and black slaves.

Until the Seven Years' War, London was fairly patient with the squatter movement. On the whole, the colonization of the West was in the interests of the British crown, inasmuch as it led to the expansion of English land holdings and their being "cleared" of their Indian population. During and after the war, the English government began re-evaluating the squatter movement, as it led to the weakening of the already rather shaky positions of the English colonial authorities in the North American provinces. The well-known American historians Charles and Mary Beard wrote about the royal proclamation of 1763 which prohibited the colonists from migrating to the western lands: "The result was much confusion and bad temper."⁷⁵

It was highly difficult to establish effective administrative control and tax collection over America's vast expanses. An entire army of clerks had to be maintained in order to collect taxes from free farmers who were scattered over the enormous territory. This was not only difficult, but dangerous, as well, since the tax collector always risked running into armed Indians, and the farmers themselves were almost all armed, and the collector might just as well get a bullet from the white colonist.

The ban on resettling across the Appalachians struck the colonists a severe moral blow, too, as traditional American freedoms collapsed. The colonists were henceforth deprived, to a certain degree, of freedom of movement.

Soon afterwards, decisions came out one after another as from a horn of plenty, introducing very strict regulations on economic, administrative, and political life in the colonies. In 1764, England passed a law levying large new taxes on a number of goods, which hit the broadest and poorest strata of society in the colonies the hardest.

Additional taxes levied by a decision of the English Parliament caused a storm of indignation in the colonies. Besides the purely economic aspect of the problem, moral and political factors also played an important part. According to old English tradition, taxes could be assessed only on those who had their own representatives in Parliament, but the colonies were not represented there. "No taxation without representation!"⁷⁶ became the slogan under which

the anti-colonial movement quickly gathered strength. The law of 1764 elicited a very negative reaction among the most varied segments of American society. Legislative assemblies in a whole string of colonies passed motions condemning the imposition of taxes on the basis of this law.

In that same year, 1764, the Sugar Act was passed.⁷⁷ This law was aimed at cutting back the American slave trade and hindering smuggling and piracy, which were commonplace at the time.

Certain historians who would defend slavery maintain that this law was passed by the British government out of humane considerations and might almost be considered a kind of defense of the rights of Blacks. This is untrue. The Sugar Act was directed against the colonists, who were showing ever greater independence, and had quite another purpose: to guarantee that it was the British Isles that gained the tremendous profits off the slave trade, and not the American colonies.

The adoption of the law was a blow at the wealthy segments of American society, to a large degree promoting the speedy development of the revolutionary situation and anti-English sentiment among the slave owners. Trying to strengthen its financial control in the colonies, London also banned the emission of banknotes in the American provinces.

All these measures provoked sharp discontent among large numbers of colonists and helped further the rapid formation of an anti-English bloc among them. All 13 of the colonies were in ferment. Numerous anti-English actions attested to the fast approach of the storm. The royal government decided under these conditions to send a 10,000-strong army to the colonies, but the army's arrival was already too late and useless and, moreover, an erroneous decision. It in fact gave the appearance that London was provoking an armed conflict with the colonies. It was a measure of desperation and the last attempt to hold onto the rich American possessions by force of arms.

Benjamin Franklin was in England at the time as the colonies' diplomatic representative. Speaking in Parliament, he prophetically declared: "Suppose a military force [is] sent into America... They will not find a rebellion; they may indeed make one."⁷⁸

The English government did not think it was sending its troops overseas as an episodic police action. It knew full well that its troops would be stationed there on a permanent

basis as a kind of military stronghold for the colonizers. Hence, the Americans' recent ally in the Seven Years' War turned into a police supervisor with unlimited powers. The problem arose of who would pay for maintaining the English troops. There were no two ways about it in London: the king's government categorically decided that the colonists themselves would bear the costs of maintaining the English punitive forces! The logic of the colonizers was that the oppressed ought to pay all expenses connected with their oppression.

London continued clamping down the screws. The Stamp Act was passed in March 1765,⁷⁹ making any deal, buying or selling, financial operation, or correspondence invalid unless it had an appropriate stamp attached, which was not cheap. The law provided for the strictest possible observance of navigation procedures, set a severe penalty for smuggling, and opened the way for English troops into the largest cities of the colonies.

The laws of 1764 inflicted a serious blow on the situation of the broad working masses, but the Stamp Act was a direct thrust at the economic interests of the bourgeoisie, plantation owners, traders, financiers, and other well-to-do segments of American society⁸⁰ who saw it as a threat to their holy of holies—profits, income, property. America's bourgeoisie and plantation owners once again convincingly demonstrated a well-known truth of history: mercilessly plundering the masses, the exploiter classes react quite hostilely to any threat to their own well-being.

The well-to-do in American society reacted altogether oversensitively to the squeeze on their class interests. The reaction was immediate and quite pronounced. All America was in ferment. The bourgeoisie and plantation owners, financiers and usurers—all America's powers that be—anathematized the king and called for the colonies to defend their interests.

The famous lawyer Patrick Henry gave a thunderous accusatory speech against the British crown in the Virginia legislative assembly. The eloquent lawyer enthusiastically exclaimed: "Give me liberty or give me death!"⁸¹ Hence the slogan which was to unite the most diverse segments of the population in the colonies against the British crown.

Patrick Henry publicly accused King George III of tyranny and flouting colonists' elementary rights. In the famous lawyer's forceful speech there sounded threats heard

openly for the first time. He exclaimed: "Tarquin and Caesar had each his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell."⁸²⁻⁸³ This speech was received differently by different deputies, with the left shouting wild, enthusiastic cries of approval, and the reactionaries indignantly exclaiming: "Treason, treason!" Such contrary reactions to Henry's speech is testimony that the coming Revolution had its confirmed opponents as well as supporters in the colonies.

Henry's speech was noteworthy in another respect, too. In spite of its determined revolutionary spirit, it sounded much like a nasty joke: the accusatory tirades against tyranny and calls for freedom and justice resounded in the chamber of the legislative assembly of the colonies' principal slave state! The sweat and blood of many thousands of slaves was what made the plantations of this most rich province so fertile. Virginia's planters, along with England's industrialists and traders, ruthlessly exploited the black slaves while simultaneously crying for justice and legal right.

Even the most left-wing deputies in Virginia's legislative assembly—those who enthusiastically greeted Henry's speech—gave no attention to this aspect of the problem. This was not happenstance, either. Patrick Henry's speech reflected an historical paradox: the most democratic bourgeois revolution of the time was near, and it would proclaim bourgeois freedoms while simultaneously making serfs of hundreds of thousands of people and sanctifying black slavery. For America's propertied classes which had reared up against British tyranny the problem of the Blacks did not exist. For the plantation owners and bourgeoisie slavery was a natural and integral part of the American way of life in the 18th century. Even in the pre-revolutionary era America's exploiting circles held a class approach to matters of revolutionary struggle: they recognized and supported only what corresponded to their interests.

A definite class watershed had been determined on the eve of the Revolution. Those who were pro-English, the so-called Loyalists or Tories, tried by every means to squeeze the revolutionary movement into a Procrustean bed of legal petitions with the purpose of re-examining the royal government's most offensive decisions. The bureaucratic class held to these positions, as it was paid from London and feared losing its source of income should the colonies separate from Great Britain. Prominent plantation owners, bourgeois,

financiers, and wholesale traders also comprised a significant part of the Loyalists. These representatives of the American elite were too closely connected to London to risk a complete breach with the mother country. The Loyalists favored compromise over controversial issues.

But such attempts were worthless, as the people remained the main obstacle to compromise. England's policies had hit at the fundamental interests of the broadest segments of the American people, whose struggle for their rights it was already impossible to localize by partial concessions on secondary matters.

Many members of the propertied classes thought that if the action by the people was really inevitable, then it should be headed and brought along in accord with the class interests of the planters and bourgeoisie. They held that the winning of state independence would provide exceptionally favorable prospects for the great majority of the well-to-do in American society. This was the principal reason that so many plantation owners and bourgeois sided with the Revolution.

Spontaneous protests by large numbers of people against English dominance in America gradually took on more and more organized forms. The first mass organizations of working people with a clearly delineated anti-colonial program appeared. The Sons of Liberty, a democratic organization joining basically workers, tradesmen, and the petty urban bourgeoisie, was especially important.⁸⁴

Repressive measures by the English colonial authorities could no longer stabilize the situation or hold back the Revolution. Moreover, they brought out new actions by the masses against the colonizers. Insurgents in Boston, for example, destroyed the British Governor's residence, wrecked the tax-collection agency, burned down the chief tax collector's house, brought down the building where the court and customs-house were located, and destroyed judicial and customs' documents contained in it.⁸⁵

Actions on the part of all segments of the white population against the stamp tax were so resolute and sweeping that by November 1, 1765, when the law was supposed to go into force, there was neither stamp paper in the colonies (it had been destroyed by the Americans), nor tax collectors, who had fled from the wrath of the people. As a result, this unpopular law never was enacted, which both puzzled London and made it more cautious. It was the first instance

when colonists had so resolutely opposed the British Parliament and prevented the introduction of a law which it had approved.

The defeat of the English colonial authorities inspired people with confidence in their strength. The entire course of events attested to the steady rise in the colonists' revolutionary actions. Neither the maneuvers of the Loyalists who tried to split the anti-colonial front nor the repressions of the English Army could stop the revolutionary onslaught.

On March 5, 1770, English troops opened fire on residents of Boston who opposed the colonizers. Five people were killed and several wounded. America was shaken by the bloody events in Boston and everywhere the cry to take up arms went out. A revolutionary outburst seemed inevitable. It seemed the Boston events would trigger a general armed struggle for the liberation of the colonies. But there was no outburst. The bourgeoisie and the planters who were heading the fight against the English colonizers thought that not all possibilities had been exhausted in the search for a compromise with London and did not risk using such a double-edged weapon of struggle as armed action by the broad masses.

The Boston events were kept localized by the joint efforts of the colonizers and American propertied classes. The Boston Massacre was prevented from burgeoning into a general armed uprising. Fear of actions by the people paralyzed the will of America's bourgeois revolutionaries and was a more important factor for them than the struggle for national interests.

The Governor of New York, expressing the opinion and interests of the well-heeled segments of the populace, wrote in May 1774: "I see, and I see it with fear and trembling, that if the disputes with Britain continue, we shall be under the worst of all possible dominions. We shall be under the domination of a riotous mob. It is to the interest of all men, therefore, to seek for reunion with the parent state."⁸⁶

The colonists' violent reaction to the Boston Massacre gradually subsided, and the impending Revolution was once again put back. It is noteworthy that the first victim of the armed revolutionary struggle in the colonies was a fugitive slave by the name of Crispus Attucks, who had been marching amongst the first rows of demonstrators in Boston when the British bullets felled him. American historian Jack Foner wrote: "Attucks, whom John Adams held re-

sponsible for leading the charge of the patriots protesting the presence of British soldiers, was buried in a common grave with four of his white companions."⁸⁷

There is a square in Boston where one may today see a monument erected to Crispus Attucks and his companions, the first victims of America's Revolutionary War. The monument reminds posterity that Blacks were the first to spill blood for the liberation of America.

Chapter II

THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

Black Americans and the Revolution

The conflict with England worsened. Popular determination to put an end to colonial dependence, along with the English government's attempts to solve matters by force of arms, obstructed any compromise solution to outstanding problems between the colonies and the parent state. It was the English who virtually provoked the beginning of military actions. The first armed conflict took place on April 18, 1775 when, following an order from London, the Governor of Massachusetts, General Thomas Gage, attempted to disarm the colonists.

An American historian was right when he wrote: "Gage provoked the suspicion that his efforts at conciliation were hypocritical when, on February 26, 1775, he sent a detachment of troops to Salem to seize military stores."¹ The English were counting on their being able to wipe out the colonists' military detachments with a sudden strike, thereby altering the course of events in their favor. The first test of strength in the colonists' armed struggle with the English troops took place at Concord and Lexington, not far from Boston. An English regiment of 700 men was routed. With a third of their soldiers and officers killed, wounded, or taken captive, the English fled the field of battle in disgrace.

The War for Independence went on for eight long years. From its very outset it was clearly marked by a tendency characteristic of both the English colonizers and the bloc of bourgeoisie and plantation owners which guided the rebels. The essence of this tendency amounted to turning the war into a "family" affair between Whites and not allowing the active participation of black Americans on either side of the clashes. There were, of course, efforts made by both the English and the colonists to use the Blacks to their advantage, but both were afraid to completely and

unconditionally entrust them with arms lest they be used to the detriment of their interests, as well they might.

The Revolutionary War for independence and liberation gave the anti-slavery movement a powerful boost. This development of events threatened the class interests of the slave owners regardless of what their political orientation might be. After military actions commenced, the slave owners sharply increased the repression of Blacks in an effort to nip in the bud any attempts on their part to use the Revolutionary War to abolish slavery. The slaves answered this mass terror campaign by rebelling, plotting, setting plantations afire, and running away from their masters.

Reactionary historians, falsifying the role of black Americans in the War for Independence, claim (just as the slave owners during the war did) that these plots, uprisings and so on were really a betrayal of the colonists fighting for freedom.

This way of looking at the matter turns everything upside down. As numerous documents show, in particular, petitions by Blacks which have been preserved, the Negro population welcomed the Revolutionary War with enthusiasm and hopes for slavery's abolition. These hopes received a quick and devastating blow, though. Since neither side in the war had any thought of freeing the slaves, they were left with nothing else but to go back to old and tested means of waging their struggle, namely, through uprisings, plots, running away, etc.

It would be erroneous to equate the English position on the Negro question with the position of the American bourgeois-planter coalition. Even though the coalition did not reflect the war's revolutionary-democratic tendencies, it nevertheless, as the predominant force in the colonies' struggle, opened up certain prospects for the slaves on the whole. The victory of the colonies in the War for Independence would lay the socio-political and economic foundations for slavery's abolition, and it is therefore no surprise that slavery was done away with in the North as a result of the war.

Moreover, had the English won the war, the colonies' socio-political and economic development would have been set back many years. For Blacks this would have meant if not eternal slavery, then at least its continuance for many years hence. During the Revolutionary War, Blacks activated all forms of their fight for freedom; in particular, slaves started fleeing from the plantations in enormous numbers.

The English realized that slavery was the Achilles' heel of the rebel colonists. By leaving slavery intact, the Americans had created an explosive mass of tremendous force in their rear. Taking this into account, the English encouraged in every way they could black slaves running away.

In 1775, at the very beginning of the war, Lord Dunmore, the Governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation which stated that all slaves of rebel colonists who were fit for military duty and who joined the English would be set free. Dunmore did not intend fulfilling his promises about liberating the slaves, but he did skillfully play on the Negroes' urge for freedom. His proclamation produced a surprisingly great effect. "The slaves," wrote one American historian, "received this announcement with more enthusiasm than the Virginia planters did. A wave of apprehension as well as hope swept across the broad Virginia plantations."²

Many thousands of black slaves in Virginia and other provinces rushed to join the English troops, counting on getting their freedom there. Confusion seized the slave owners in Virginia and elsewhere as they realized they might lose all of their live property. The flight of slaves from the plantations took on threatening dimensions, and organizing any kind of effective security against this under wartime conditions was an extremely difficult task.

The mass flight of slaves following Lord Dunmore's proclamation strongly suggests that, by using the powerful weapon of emancipating the slaves, the English colonizers could have broken up the colonial liberation movement from within. One English general who fought against the insurgent Americans reported to London that were the crown to proclaim the slaves in North America free, "the Revolution would be over in the South in a month".³

Not all Loyalists were in complete support of the English measures to encourage the black slaves to action. Many thought Lord Dunmore's proclamation a forbidden device, a violation of the ethic of class solidarity, which, as they saw it, should be observed even in times of war. There were many slave owners among the Loyalists, and agreeing with the proclamation calling for the slaves to run away from their masters meant sawing off the bough they were sitting on. The Loyalists realized that it was very dangerous to set a precedent of encroachment on private property.

Attempts by the English to strike the rebellious colonists a blow in the back went on in the subsequent years of the

war, as well.⁴ This was due to the fact that the War for Independence was at the same time a kind of civil war between supporters and opponents of the mother country and, in any civil war, the struggle between different classes and population groups reaches such a fever pitch that any method becomes fair game in the fight, even one that might seem illogical from the point of view of class interests.

Dunmore's proclamation posed the slaveholders a most difficult problem: how to neutralize the ill effects of this appeal to the slaves? The usual terrorist measures were little effective under wartime conditions, since there were simply not enough armed forces to carry them out. The slave owners were not able to fight on two fronts—against the English and against their own slaves. The continual transferring of troops by the warring sides in semi-guerilla warfare created additional difficulties with keeping the slaves under control.

The planters decided to initiate a counter-propaganda campaign. The Virginia Safety Committee published a counter-proclamation which said the slaves must not believe Dunmore's offers, since England itself owned slaves whom it had no intention of setting free. The counter-proclamation especially stressed that England made huge profits off the slave trade and categorically rejected all Virginia's efforts to put an end to it.

It also focused attention on the fact that Dunmore's offers applied only to adult slaves and, more particularly, males who belonged to patriots and not Loyalists. The authors further emphasized that the slaves would have to leave behind their families and that—the main point—the slaves would still never see their freedom, as Dunmore would break his promise and the Negroes would be sold into slavery in the West Indies.

Along with this counter-propaganda, Virginia's slave owners fell back on an old and tested means of holding the slaves in obedience—terror. Virginia passed a law in December 1775, introducing the severest possible penalties, including the death penalty, for runaway slaves who were captured. Public executions were arranged for their "educative" effect: slaves who were caught had their heads chopped off, were burned at the stake, or hanged. It would be hard to find an analogous example in the chronicles of history when, in the course of a revolution, the leading class in the revolutionary struggle waged so cruel a terrorist policy in relation to its potential ally.

The anti-Negro policies of the coalition between the bourgeoisie and plantation owners seriously undermined the positions of the revolutionary forces, causing them serious problems in the fight against the colonizers and their allies in the North American provinces. It is our opinion, too, that the anti-Negro course taken by the bourgeois-planter bloc was one of the most important causes for the numerous military and political setbacks of the revolutionary forces. The distaste and fear of the Founding Fathers to use the powerful revolutionary potential of black Americans, first and foremost slaves, in the struggle with the colonizers was one of the serious factors which led to the war's being dragged out for eight long years. In the course of this war the rebel colonists were to find themselves numerous times in highly difficult military and political straits. Moreover, the anti-Negro policies of the Revolution's leaders even created the threat of mass action by the black slaves against the rebel colonists.

On September 24, 1775, the well-known revolutionary John Adams noted in his diary impressions from his conversation with two high-placed persons from Georgia: "These gentlemen give a melancholy account of the State of Georgia and South Carolina. They say that if one thousand regular troops should land in Georgia, and their commander be provided with arms and clothes enough, and proclaim freedom to all the Negroes who would join his camp, twenty thousand Negroes would join it from the two Provinces in a fortnight. The Negroes have a wonderful art of communicating intelligence among themselves; it will run several hundred miles in a week or fortnight." Adams' interlocutors only hoped that the English would not risk such an operation. He continued: "They say their only security is this: that all the king's friends, and tools of government, have large plantations and property in Negroes; so that the slaves of the Tories would be lost, as well as those of the Wigs."⁵

Slave owners declared that the flight of slaves was spreading with the rapidity of a forest fire. During the war, it became a mass phenomenon. Thomas Jefferson, the outstanding statesman of the Revolution, asserted that, in 1778, 30,000 slaves fled Virginia alone. Georgia planters estimated that 75-85 percent of their slaves took to flight during the war from their colony, which numbered about 15,000 slaves in 1774. According to figures of the South Carolina slave owners, out of 110,000 slaves they lost no less than 25,000 to flight. "It appears to be conservative to

say that from 1775 until 1783 some 100,000 slaves (i.e., about one out of every six men, women and children) succeeded in escaping from slavery, though very often finding death or slavery elsewhere."⁶

The flight of slaves would undoubtedly have taken on even larger dimensions had information not filtered back from English-occupied territory as to how hunger, disease, and sale into slavery in the West Indies, and sometimes torture and death awaited runaway slaves there. Herbert Aptheker with good reason concludes: "This mass flight for freedom is surely one of the most dramatic, and pathetic, features of the American Revolution."⁷

In the long run, the English did not risk going too far in their fight against the rebel colonists. They did not take advantage of the colonists' unwillingness to liberate the slaves, because the British West Indies had about 750,000 slaves and many of the most prominent slave owners in the South were Loyalists. The English and Loyalists incited the slaves to run away and to other actions detrimental to the enemy only so as to weaken him.

Politically, the English colonizers were not and could not be supporters of the black slaves. If, because of tactical considerations, the English sometimes flirted politically with the Blacks, their strategic course was nevertheless a clearly delineated anti-Negro one. The proclamation of freedom for the slaves was fraught with serious consequences for the English, as well as the American patriots. This is why neither side would take any sort of consistent position on the matter so vitally important to the Blacks.

Silas Deane, sent by Congress to France to gain her support in the war against England, wrote in 1776 from Paris that an anti-English uprising of the slaves on Jamaica should be raised. The Americans did not risk taking up this suggestion, even though the military expediency of such an uprising was plainly apparent. The reason for the negative reaction to Deane's proposal was that the leaders of the American Revolution were frightened by mass actions by the slaves no less than the English colonizers.

The facts indicate that slaves ran away not only from those planters who supported the rebel colonists. Many out of the total of 100,000 slaves also fled their masters during the war years, even if they supported the English. Both slave owners who supported and opposed the Revolution jealously stood up for the protection of their right to own

black slaves. As the war showed, the slaves could not count on getting their freedom from either side.

The flight of the slaves undermined the foundations of the slave-owning economic system, depleting the plantations of work hands. It caused tremendous material losses to the slave owners by disorganizing their production. But rebellions and plots by Blacks which threatened the very lives of the slaveholders were the object of particular hatred and fear.

In the war's first stage, many slaves who had been misled by the propaganda of the English and their American allies hoped that the mother country would give them freedom. There are facts which indicate that in a number of cases, while readying their plots and uprisings, the Blacks made contact with the armies of the English and Loyalists. In 1775, for example, a plot was uncovered in North Carolina where many slaves were to cooperate with the armed regiment of Loyalists that was operating in a nearby region. Inciting the Blacks to rebellion, the Loyalists promised them freedom should the operation succeed and even the creation of their own Negro self-rule.⁸

In September 1774, black participants in a plot in Boston turned to the English for help. They sent a letter to General Thomas Gage, the English Governor of Massachusetts, with a request to be given weapons. The plotters wrote that they were willing to fight on the side of the English if they could have their freedom. Gage was interested in this proposition and ordered the officers in his command to study the matter.

Participants in rebellions and plots were severely punished. An armed action by Blacks in Georgia took place in November 1774 which led to the deaths of four white planters and the wounding of three others. Two Blacks who had taken part were burned alive.⁹

A grand plot by Negroes was uncovered in North Carolina in 1775, the largest such plot of the war. Hundreds, some estimate even thousands, of slaves took part in it. The planters were forced to organize the armed patrol of an extensive area. After the plot was quashed, several Blacks were publicly executed, a large number were whipped or branded with hot irons, and many had their ears cut off.¹⁰

In the Virginia city of Alexandria, Blacks poisoned several overseers. Four of those involved were executed and their heads were cut off and fixed on the chimneys of the courthouse. "It is probable," wrote Herbert Aptheker, "that a

few of the executed slaves belonged to the eminent George Mason of Virginia."¹¹ This slave owner, an active fighter of the Revolution, was the author of the Declaration of Rights and, later, the principal author of the Bill of Rights amended to the US Constitution.

In 1779, a slave plot was discovered in New Jersey whose participants were closely linked to the English and Loyalists. With the aid of a provocateur, a carefully concealed plan for an uprising was unearthed in New York in 1780. The slaves were preparing to set fire to the slave owners' houses and flee over to the English. Two white Loyalists with close ties to the slaves were arrested along with black conspirators in the affair.

When plots and uprisings failed, Blacks who were able to get away often formed armed groups and regiments. The slave owners and their minions very much feared the attacks of such regiments. The raids of maroons, as fugitive slaves who hid out in the West Indies or Dutch Guiana were called, were especially fearsome to the planters. Raids by maroons on areas adjoining their settlements helped activate the anti-slavery movement among Blacks during the Revolutionary War.

A large armed regiment of Blacks operated during the war outside of Savannah, Georgia. It was put together with English aid, the slaves being promised their liberty after the war. In 1786, the militia of Georgia and South Carolina, with the support of armed Indians, attacked and destroyed this regiment. Various shows of arms by Blacks continued in many states after the end of the war. In particular, the Governor of South Carolina reported armed conflicts in 1787 with maroon regiments in the southern part of his state.

It became common during the war for slaves to refuse to work on the plantations. For example, after American troops entered Savannah, slaves left by the English refused to work.

Slave rebellions caused the colonists serious problems. In 1775, for instance, a group of Maryland citizens asked their governor for arms to protect themselves in case of a slave uprising. As the threat seemed plausible, the governor was compelled to furnish 400 stands of arms for this purpose, even though they were badly needed by the American Army in its war against the English.¹²

Numerous actions by Blacks against slavery seriously weakened the military efforts of the rebel colonists and diverted a goodly part of their forces to the protection of

their plantations. As Herbert Aptheker notes, these actions bear witness to "the awful inconsistency in waging a war of national liberation and simultaneously confining one-fifth of the population in chains".¹³

Another American historian pointed out that the "Negroes had to fight for the right to fight. In July 1775, General Washington sent out orders for recruiters not to enlist soldiers from certain groups—deserters from the British Army, vagabonds, strollers, boys, those suspected of being enemies to American liberty, and Negroes."¹⁴

After a series of serious military setbacks, the Revolution's leaders saw the war would be a protracted one and were compelled at last to agree to the limited participation of Blacks in the armed struggle against the English. It was not just military necessity which compelled them to agree to this—with increasing frequency the English were using Blacks in military actions against the rebel colonists, and had managed to make certain inroads here. Hence, a month after Lord Dunmore's proclamation was issued, the English put together an armed regiment of black Americans. "Officially designated the Ethiopian Regiment", the three hundred slaves who joined it were to "fight for their freedom in uniforms bearing the inscription 'Liberty to Slaves'. Understandably, slaves in British uniforms generated alarm in the American command."¹⁵

It must be pointed out that the English were compelled to draft Blacks into their army. "Things are now come to that crisis," wrote General Thomas Gage to Lord Barrington, the British Secretary-at-War, "that we must avail ourselves of every resource, even to raise Negroes in our cause."¹⁶

It was not easy deciding to use the other side's slaves in the war. Congress had to wage a tough struggle to get the slave owners to agree to even the partial use of Blacks in the conflict. South Carolina and Georgia were especially obstinate in their opposition to this decision, since in South Carolina the black population considerably exceeded the white, while in Georgia Blacks constituted 40 percent of the population. Slave owners in the two states shuddered at the thought that Blacks would be entrusted with weapons. "Many in South Carolina and Georgia," one historian notes, "regarded arming the slave as an unpleasant way to commit suicide". "We are much disgusted here," wrote Christopher Gadsden, aristocrat and politician from Charleston, "at the Congress recommending us to arm our slaves. It was received

with great resentment, as a very dangerous and impolitic step."¹⁷

The irreconcilability of the slave owners in these states on allowing Blacks into the American Army cost the patriots dearly. In early 1778, the English began a forceful attack southward actively supported by thousands of Loyalists and slaves. In the year the offensive lasted, they captured Savannah and Augusta, Georgia. From Georgia the English invaded neighboring South Carolina, where thousands of slaves met the English Army after its commander, Sir Henry Clinton, officially declared that all slaves who came over to the English would be freed.

It is revealing that the English did not trust Blacks in their army and tried, as a rule, to disperse them among white soldiers. According to Benjamin Quarles, the American historian and author of numerous books on Negro history, no less than a thousand Blacks were issued weapons and fought in the English regular army.

Not only were they used there, but were also put to work as buglers, musicians, workers, foragers, servants, and so forth. The English were not chary with promises. The slaves were promised freedom, and free Blacks, land, if they would fight against the Americans. One detachment, called the Black Pioneers, was comprised entirely of free Blacks. Each soldier in it was promised a piece of land after the war.

The English tried to use Blacks against the patriots throughout the war, and even at the war's end, on February 2, 1782, one of the active participants in the struggle against the colonists sent a letter to the Commander-in-Chief of the English troops in America, General Henry Clinton. The letter set out a program for using the slaves against the Americans in combat. The writer pointed out that in the South's hot climate the Afro-Americans made far better soldiers than the Whites. The letter stressed that Blacks were excellent in reconnaissance and were very disciplined. Taking them into the English Army would not only deprive the enemy of property, but of workers, too, which would lead to an economic failure. The author further wrote of the necessity for drafting 10,000 Afro-Americans into the English Army, sending white officers and non-commissioned officers into Negro squadrons and promoting Blacks to non-commissioned officers.

The author thought pay of one guinea adequate for the Blacks, the main point being to promise them freedom for

serving till the war's end. Of those Blacks joining up with the English forces, noted the letter, many would be unfit for military service, and many would be women and children, and these could be used for working the land. It was assumed that they would not only support themselves, but would provide the black soldiers, too, with everything they needed. The letter-writer said that should the experiment not turn out right, which was rather improbable, funds spent on it would be so minuscule as to eliminate the element of risk. The letter also stressed the need for paying a monetary compensation to the Loyalist slave owners whose slaves might join up with the English Army.

As the war progressed, the mendacity of the English promises to free the slaves became more and more apparent. There was even a number of instances where the English sold slaves refusing to join their army back into slavery. This happened in South Carolina and other states. Blacks refusing to support the English were subjected to repressions, left to starve, die from epidemics, and endure all kinds of other hardships. Sometimes the English would even kill the slaves when forced to retreat, as happened, for example, in Virginia in 1776.

To neutralize the use of slaves against them by the English, the more far-sighted leaders of the American Revolution insisted it was necessary to at least partially decide the Negro problem. Terrorist measures taken by authorities in the southern colonies against Blacks, which turned many thousands of them against the Revolution, had to be lessened first of all. North Carolina, for instance, passed a law in 1777 setting up serious new obstacles to the emancipation of the slaves. Slave owners declared that "the evil and pernicious practice of freeing slaves in this State ought at this alarming and critical time to be guarded against by every friend and well-wisher to his country."¹⁸

South Carolina went even farther in perpetuating slavery. A law was passed there in 1780 which decreed that residents of the state who volunteered for the army would receive a bounty, part of which would be a prize slave.¹⁹ Paper money printed by the US government quickly lost its value, and this caused South Carolina and Georgia to initiate the practice of paying their officials' salaries partially in slaves. This was really the height of cynicism: paying in slaves for service to the Revolution! Such monstrous practicality has had no equal in any other revolution in history.

The political situation in the colonies and the entire course of military actions showed that without some policy changes regarding the Negro matter the war could not be won. The great inroads slavery had made in America turned the battle for such policy changes into a most complicated social, political, and military problem. The struggle over the problem of black Americans was a protracted one, punctuated with varying success. Its focus was whether or not to allow Blacks the right to carry weapons for fighting the British and Loyalists. The slave owners and their allies, representatives from the southern colonies, were most firm in their opposition to letting Blacks into the American Army. Trenchant debates over the issue were carried on in the Continental Congress, the supreme legislative organ in the colonies. On September 26, 1775, "a debate occurred in the Continental Congress upon the draft of a letter to the Commander-in-Chief [on drafting Blacks in the army—*R.I.*]... E. Rutledge, of South Carolina, moved that the General [Washington—*R.I.*] should be instructed to discharge all the Negroes", both slaves and freemen. On October 18, the Congress passed the appropriate resolution. Ten days before, the American Army's Council of Generals, with Washington and other well-known military leaders in attendance, unanimously voted against allowing Blacks into the American Army. On November 12, 1775, Washington issued a corresponding order which applied to all the American armed forces.²⁰

The northern, as well as the southern states passed laws prohibiting Blacks from joining the army. In the New England state of New Hampshire, a law was passed on September 19, 1776 which said that "part of the Militia of this State commonly called the Training Band, shall be constituted of all able-bodied Male Persons therein, from sixteen years old to fifty, excepting Negroes, Mulattoes, and Indians".²¹

But the Blacks' energetic struggle for the right to fight in the army, the grave situation on the front, the pressure of anti-slavery forces, and the relatively successful use of Blacks in the English Army, which threatened the Americans with serious consequences, all forced the American ruling circles to gradually reconsider their attitude toward black Americans.

On the Battlefield for Freedom

The problem of what to do with the Afro-Americans was especially pressing in the American armed forces; hence, it was there that the problem got its first review. On December 31, 1775, George Washington wrote the President of Congress: "It has been represented to me that free Negroes who have served in this Army are very much dissatisfied at being discarded." The Commander-in-Chief also declared: "I have presumed to depart from the resolution [of the Congress of October 18, 1775.—*R.I.*] respecting them, and have given license for their being enlisted."²² Washington's decision was forced. It was not just a problem of the "discarded" Negroes being dissatisfied. As one American historian has justifiably asserted, "because of very uncertain pay and very certain hardships, a substantial portion of his [Washington's] army deserted him at Valley Forge".²³

The patriot army urgently had to be repleted, which forced the Revolution's leaders to act in spite of racist prejudice. The military and political expedience of Washington's decision was obvious, and on November 16, 1776 Congress decreed its support of the Commander-in-Chief's initiative and sanctioned the return of the Blacks to the army.²⁴ The legislators were still not prepared, however, to agree to letting into the army all Blacks who wished to fight the English. For all its limitations, Congress' resolution was of great import. A precedent had been set giving Abolitionist forces, in both individual states and on a nationwide scale, the chance to demand that Blacks be allowed into the army.

In 1776, the state of New York passed a resolution giving citizens drafted into the army the right to defer their call to other persons who could be either black or white. Certainly, only well-to-do Americans could afford the "considerable expenses the law required to buy their way out of service in the army. A characteristic feature of the American Revolution: the planters and bourgeois were firmly convinced that everything in the world "can be bought and sold, including patriotism," which they so eloquently appealed to when the need for fighting for America's freedom came up.

Many slave owners sent their slaves into the army instead of themselves, for which the slaves were rewarded by being set free. In 1778, Rhode Island and Massachusetts passed laws allowing Blacks to join the army. The law passed by the

Rhode Island General Assembly said that Blacks joining the army would receive financial and other compensation on a par with other soldiers who had been called up. Especially important to the slaves was that clause in the law which said that "every slave who enlisted for the duration received automatic freedom 'as though he had never been encumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery'".²⁵

One after another other states, including southern ones, began passing laws permitting Blacks into the army. And if the slaves of a planter who supported the patriots' cause joined the army, their master was given financial compensation.

Only two states, South Carolina and Georgia, categorically refused to agree to allow their slaves into the armed forces. On March 29, 1779, the Continental Congress was compelled to pass a resolution recommending that South Carolina and Georgia forthwith take measures for drafting 3,000 militarily fit Negroes, but even this did not produce an effect on the plantation owners of these two principal slaveholding states. They made it quite clear that they would withdraw from the war before agreeing to draft their Blacks into the army.²⁶

The position of these states' leaders convincingly demonstrated that in bourgeois revolutions the class selfishness of the bourgeoisie and other ruling classes often takes precedence over considerations of elementary logic. The drafting of Blacks into the US Army was truly a pressing military and political necessity, but all the same, risking the break up of the only just formed Union of states, slave owners in Georgia and South Carolina opposed the resolution of the highest legislative organ of the United States with amazing persistence.

In this opposition the embryo was already discernible of the future separatist actions of the southern plantation owners who, 80 years later, would try to break up the Union from within, giving rise to the Civil War, since their belonging to the United States would no longer suit their selfish class interests.

The position taken by South Carolina and Georgia caused the US government significant difficulties in solving the urgent problems of the Revolutionary War, but did not have a decisive impact on the course of the war. The overwhelming majority of states granted Blacks the right, in one way or another, to fight against the English and, as the

Blacks believed, for slavery's abolition and for their freedom.

The right Blacks won to fight with weapons in their hands in the revolutionary army was a turning point in the war, one which left a deep impress on the war's course and outcome. The most far-sighted leaders of the Revolution realized the pressing necessity of drafting Blacks into the American Army. Even the widely known Alexander Hamilton, for all his conservatism, was a confirmed supporter of allowing Blacks into the American Army. On March 14, 1779, he wrote to the President of Congress: "Indeed I hardly see how a sufficient force can be collected ... without it [the drafting of Negroes]... It should be considered, that if we do not make use of them in this way [as soldiers—*R.I.*], the enemy probably will." Hamilton, who had no doubts that Negroes would make excellent soldiers under the right commanders, also said of Negroes that "subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude will make them sooner become soldiers than our white inhabitants".²⁷

The generals and officers of the American Army highly esteemed the fighting qualities of the black soldiers. One military leader, Henry Laurens, wrote to George Washington from South Carolina on March 16, 1779 that it was mandatory to shift immediate reinforcements to the South so as to stabilize the situation on the front there. Laurens believed that were he given enough weapons for the 3,000 Negro soldiers he expected to receive there, he would be able to drive the English out of Georgia and the occupied areas of Eastern Florida by the end of July.²⁸ James Madison, another famous figure from the Revolution and a future president of the United States, wrote to the President of Congress on November 28, 1779 of the need to increase the number of Blacks called up and that it would be expedient to use them instead of new white recruits. Madison thought it more consonant with the principles of freedom that Blacks be drafted directly into the army. He insisted that Blacks should be dispersed among Whites in the army and put under the command of white officers. So long as these stipulations be observed, he foresaw no difficulty with the Blacks. Madison concluded his letter by expressing confidence that the emancipation of slaves who took part in the war would not undermine the foundations of slavery in the US since he believed "that a freeman immediately loses all attachment and sympathy with his former fellow-slaves".²⁹

The entire course of events testified to the necessity of granting Blacks at least a limited right to bear arms to fight for the republic's cause. An ever growing number of US leaders was concluding that victory in the Revolution could be gained only with the help of black soldiers, and Blacks did finally, at long last, win the right to fight against the colonizers.

Both slaves and free Blacks performed their military duty in the struggle with tremendous enthusiasm. Black regiments just formed fought successfully against the regular troops of Hessian mercenaries and the English in the Battle of Rhode Island. One observer wrote about the Afro-Americans who took part in this battle: "Three times in succession they [the Blacks—*R.I.*] were attacked with more desperate valor and fury by well-disciplined and veteran troops and three times did they successfully repel the assault and thus preserved our army from capture."³⁰ The American General John Thomas asserted that he looked upon Negroes, in general, as no worse than other men in action and that many had "proved themselves brave."³¹

Even in the first battles the Negro soldiers gave good account of themselves as brave warriors. In December 1775, several officers of the American Army, including two colonels, addressed a letter to the general court of Massachusetts. They told the story of a Negro by the name of Salem Poor who heroically fought in the Battle of Charleston: He "behaved like an experienced officer, as well as an excellent soldier... In the person of the said Negro is set forth a brave and gallant soldier."³²

Wilson, a well-known American historian, has justly concluded that "the Sons of Africa fought side by side with their countrymen of the white race... Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that some of the most heroic deeds of the War for Independence were performed by black men."³³

Many valorous deeds included in the chronicles of the War for Independence are indeed linked with the names of black soldiers. The Negro Jack Sisson helped in the attack of July 1777 on English headquarters in Newport, Rhode Island. The operation resulted in the capture of General Prescott, Commander of the English troops in Rhode Island, and Major Barrington.³⁴

Black soldiers also performed deeds of self-sacrifice defending their white commanders. One such instance took place during the Battle of Points Bridge, New York, when

soldiers of a Negro battalion demonstrated mass heroism in repelling the enemy's attempts to capture the body of their fallen commander, Colonel Greene. This episode was written up as follows: "When Colonel Greene was surprised and murdered near Points Bridge, New York, on the 14th of May, 1781, his colored soldiers heroically defended him till they were cut to pieces, and the enemy reached him over the dead bodies of his faithful Negroes."³⁵

Very few cases are known where black soldiers surrendered, since they knew that capture meant slavery, and often terrible torture and death, as well. During one battle, an entire detachment of Blacks preferred death on the battlefield to capture. Every member of the detachment was killed, with not a single one surrendering.

Blacks also heroically fought in the French and Spanish troops sent to America after France and Spain declared war on England. When the patriots stormed Savannah in 1779, 545 free Blacks and slaves from the French West Indies bravely battled the English as part of the French Army. Henri Christophe, who was later to play an important part in the battles for the liberation of Haiti from French colonial rule, took part in this battle.³⁶

After the Spanish joined the French as allies, Negro troops from Louisiana fought in their army. The Spaniards created several Negro militia companies comprised of freemen and slaves. These companies had black officers. "In 1779, Governor Bernardo Galvez of Louisiana led 'a half-white and half-black army' in a successful campaign to drive the British from Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley. Later that year, 'with more slaves and free coloreds added to his force', Galvez took possession of Mobile and Pensacola. Six black officers ... were rewarded with medals of honor from the King of Spain. Professor Ronald C. McConnell says of the Louisiana Blacks in the American Revolutionary War: 'Not only had these troops performed creditably against the British, their first experience against trained European soldiers ... but they ... contributed to America's winning of independence by helping to close the gateways to the American West and South through which the British planned to strike at the western flank of the colonies. In so doing they engaged British troops that might have been used elsewhere.'³⁷

Blacks were the best reconnoiters in the revolutionary army. One such scout, whose name is unknown to us, went over

to the English while carrying out an assignment for the Americans. He passed on such persuasive false information that the Americans were weak and unprepared for battle that the English, believing in an easy victory, hurried to attack the American position. The attackers were routed and had to retreat after losing 100 men while the Americans lost but one. This battle took place near Edenton, North Carolina, on December 8, 1775.

In July 1779, a colored man by the name of Pompey deduced the English password and helped an American detachment get rid of the English sentries and successfully storm the strategically important Stony Point Fort in New York State. Six hundred prisoners and many spoils were seized in the fort. For this deed Pompey, who belonged to an American captain, received his freedom.³⁸

In 1781, during the siege of Yorktown, a black slave named James, who was an agent of the French Marquis de Lafayette, a hero of the Revolutionary War who fought in the US Army, at the risk of his life gave the English false information which saved Lafayette's army from destruction. Virginia gave James his freedom in 1786 for his services during the Revolutionary War. He took the name James Lafayette. In 1819, by a special resolution of the Virginia Legislative Assembly, James Lafayette was rewarded 100 dollars and given a yearly pension of 40 dollars.³⁹

Blacks were especially numerous in the US Navy, since in colonial days they had been heavily used as sailors and pilots. As Blacks comprised a sizeable part of the crews of both sea-going and river vessels, limitations imposed on their service in the armed forces of the republic during the war did not apply to the navy. Having a superb knowledge of the areas where naval actions were carried out and with much shipboard experience, Blacks fought artfully and with great courage.

It is known that no fewer than 5,000 black Americans fought in the ranks of the regular US Army during the War. It is virtually impossible to estimate how many more fought the English in partisan detachments or worked as scouts and guides. Considering that the US Army numbered 25,000-30,000 during the war, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Blacks made a great contribution to the military defeat of the colonizers and to the creation and consolidation of the United States of America.

In September 1863, at the height of the Civil War, when the issue of Blacks participating in the armed struggle against the rebel slave owners took on particular importance, the *Army and Navy Journal* justly wrote: "The record is clear, that from the beginning to the conclusion of the war of the Revolution [1775-1783—*R.I.*], Negroes served in the Continental armies with intelligence, courage, and steadfastness."⁴⁰

At least one instance is known of a black woman joining the Continental Army. "Passing as a man under the assumed name of Robert Shurtliff, Deborah Gannett joined up with a Massachusetts Regiment in May 1782."⁴¹ She remained a part of the regiment until October 1783, satisfactorily carrying out all her duties as a soldier. Several years later, after Deborah Gannett's story had come to light, the state of Massachusetts, in a special resolution, took note of her military service and awarded her with a monetary prize.

Blacks made a large contribution to the victory of the Revolution by their direct participation in military actions as a part of the regular US Army. They courageously fought in partisan detachments, were the main productive force on the plantations, and helped produce the material values without which the war could not have been won.

How did the America of the slave owners and bourgeoisie answer their heroic participation in the war? Only several thousand Blacks who directly participated in the military actions received their freedom from slavery. If slavery was abolished in the North, this was in no way out of gratitude to Blacks for their contribution to the cause of defeating the English colonizers. This was no humane action on the part of the North's bourgeoisie toward Afro-Americans, as bourgeois historians frequently claim. Slavery turned out to be economically unprofitable in the North and therefore died a natural death there.

Moreover, as paradoxical as it may seem at first glance, the Revolution on the whole made the foundations of the slave-owning system even firmer. After victory in the war, important economic and political incentives for further spreading and consolidating slavery were created in the southern states. Slavery developed in two directions: first it was spread through the annexation of huge new territories, and second, consolidated through the strengthening of slave owners' political power within the Union of states, power which derived primarily from cotton, which played an important

role in the nation's economic development. The Revolution enslaved Blacks more than ever, strengthening the yoke of slavery in the South, where 20 percent of the country's population languished in servitude.

As far as the part Blacks played in the War for Independence is concerned, America's reactionary forces did all they could to make sure this heroic page in the history of the USA and the Negro people was consigned to oblivion. "The services of the Blacks in the Revolutionary War were soon forgotten," writes the American historian Jack Foner. "There are no national heroes and hardly a monument to remind us that Blacks fought in the American Revolution."⁴²

The Revolution Sanctions Slavery

During the Revolutionary War the Abolitionist movement became a tangible force in the nation's socio-political life. In the post-war period, the unity which white and black opponents of slavery had attained during the war was further developed. It was not by luck that during and after the war, slavery and the slave trade were eliminated in the states of the North and Northwest. The unity of white and black Abolitionists was largely instrumental in bringing this about.

The situation in the South was quite different. The social structure of the states there and the complete economic, political, and spiritual domination of the slave owners hindered the formation of a similar coalition between Blacks and Whites. The emancipation of the slaves in the North was the prologue of slavery's complete demise, and even though a substantial historical period separates this prologue from the real elimination of slavery in 1863, this in no way belittles the importance of the progress made in the fight against slavery in the North during and right after the Revolutionary War. The economic profitability of slavery in the South and the material concerns of influential commercial, industrial, and political circles of the North in maintaining slavery in the US South were the basic reasons that slavery was not entirely eliminated by America's first revolution.

The inconsistency of the Revolution's leaders on the Negro question was reflected in the Declaration of Independence. This, the most important document of the

Revolutionary War, proclaimed to the world the birth of the first independent nation in America. Many of the Revolution's leaders shared the views of the Abolitionists to one extent or another. Even George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army and a man in no way noted for his radical views, being himself a slave owner, declared that no one could want more earnestly than himself to see a definite plan of slavery's repeal put into action.

The heroic efforts of the white and black Abolitionists proved unable to crush the united front of American reaction, which managed to maintain its basic positions on the Negro question. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the most important acts of the Revolution, proclaimed the fundamental principles on which the new nation was to be built. It is natural that the chief battle between adherents and opponents of slavery would unfold over adoption of these documents.

The intensity of this battle is evinced in the fact that several lines condemning slavery were removed from Thomas Jefferson's original text of the Declaration of Independence under pressure from the slave owners. Listing the crimes of the English king against whose tyranny the colonies rose, Jefferson wrote: "He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of this Christian king of Great Britain determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold."⁴³

This section of the Declaration never came out because US slave owners and the bourgeoisie, wishing to continue their exceptionally profitable exploitation of black slaves, turned down Jefferson's proposal to condemn slavery. Not only did some leaders of the Revolution keep slavery preserved in the South, they gave this shameful institution truly American dimensions. The abolition of slavery in the northern and northwestern states was compensated for by its rapid development in the South. The raising of cotton became an important economic stimulus for its further development. A new business, monstrous in its cynicism and cruelty, appeared after the Revolutionary War: the "rearing" of slaves for sale.

In order to understand the position of the Revolution's leaders on the Negro question, we should determine how George Washington, the military and political leader of the Revolution, viewed slavery. Not only was Washington Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, he was also the country's first president and one of the richest planters-slave owners, which could not help but influence his position on the slavery issue.

A large number of black slaves worked on Washington's huge estate in Virginia before the war. Washington was a zealous owner and introduced a number of important innovations on his estate. He realized the need to look after his slaves' health, since they were the principal productive force on his plantations. Washington provided them with the necessary minimum of medical care and was careful to observe elementary rules of sanitation and hygiene. His live property was adequately fed, but he would not allow any philanthropy toward his slaves. This was a sober and purely businesslike approach by a thoughtful owner of how to best manage his property and receive a large return on the exploitation of black slaves.

As everywhere else in the South, corporal punishment was practiced on Washington's plantations, in particular, flogging. Washington's biographers note, however, that he did not use particularly cruel methods of punishment. As on any other plantation, Washington's slaves were bought, sold, and bartered. In 1776, while sending one of his slaves to be sold, Washington noted in an accompanying letter that the slave was very strong and could be sold for a handsome profit. Washington specified that various food and other items should be brought back using the money obtained from the slave's sale.

Washington became a member of the Continental Congress in 1774, representing his fellow slaveholding planters from Virginia and making sure their point of view on slavery was aired there. Washington was a far-sighted, perspicacious politician and military leader. He was well aware of the revolutionary nature of the War for Independence and the role of the people in it. As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, he consistently pointed to the need of always reckoning with the opinion of the people in a war such as the colonists were waging. He thought a lofty moral spirit and readiness for self-sacrifice ought to substitute to a significant degree for compulsion in the solution of military and political

problems. His views did not, however, in any way concern Blacks, since Washington did not conceive of them as part of the "people". When the war ended, Washington retired to his estate where, as before, the labor of black slaves was widely used. Aside from rent-paying tenants, there were 216 black slaves on his estate.

As a far-sighted statesman, Washington realized that slavery's continuation concealed great danger for the future of the republic. As an experienced and practical landowner, he had the opportunity to see for himself the inefficiency of slave labor on his own estate. Washington favored a gradual legislative repeal of slavery. He did not want to force the issue because, as a practical politician, he realized that such a course was not feasible: the balance of forces between supporters and opponents of slavery weighed in favour of the latter and would not allow for the emancipation of the slaves in the near future. Washington's personal position on slavery is reflected in his will, which gave freedom to all his slaves.

His position during the war was largely determined by his attempts to maintain and solidify the bloc of plantation owners and bourgeoisie which were at the head of the Revolution. Moderation on the Negro issue was, Washington deeply believed, the most important way to eliminating the contradictions between the planters and bourgeoisie and creating a firm and effective union between these two major political and economic forces.

As the army's Commander-in-Chief, Washington was guided by purely military considerations on the matter of drafting Blacks into the American Army. When military necessity required that they be armed, Washington unflinchingly supported the Revolution's leaders who thought it imperative to bring Blacks into the republic's armed forces.

Washington chaired the Constitutional Convention which gathered in May 1787 to reconsider the Articles of the Confederation, the first US Constitution, and to draft a new Constitution. Most members of the Constitutional Convention held conservative views and were led by Alexander Hamilton. Many conservative acts on important socio-economic and political problems of the Revolution are linked with this man's name. Hamilton did not conceal his extremely negative attitude toward the working masses. It is he who made the cynical remark which gained such renown: "Your people, sir, is a great beast."⁴⁴

The Convention gathered soon after the suppression of a rebellion led by Daniel Shays which tried to carry the Revolution further and solve some of the more important general democratic problems that still remained after the eight-year War for Independence. For men of Hamilton's persuasions, Shays Rebellion meant that the people—the beast—had escaped from its cage. Frightened by mass actions of the working people, the Convention adopted a Constitution which did not take consideration of the basic interests of the US working strata. It was only three years later, in 1791, that ten Amendments, known as the "Bill of Rights", were included in the Constitution. It granted the American people such rights as freedom of speech and press, the right to convene, worship as one wished, and others.⁴⁵

The anti-democratism of the new US Constitution was especially vivid in the part which concerned black Americans. Having proclaimed the United States a torch of democracy and an example to follow, the Constitution's authors claimed the US had a special, leading role in mankind's history, but they were shamefully silent on the existence of slavery in the country.

Leading American politicians and statesmen insisted that, like Israel in the past, the United States had been relegated a special place in world history by the Almighty, that Americans were God's chosen people. In 1785, Jefferson proposed that the sons of Israel following the sun's rays be depicted on US governmental seal. While President in 1805, Jefferson again returned to this topic, asserting in his presidential message that God guided the ancestors of the Americans just as he had Israel in ancient times. With these pretensions to a special place in man's history and emphasizing US democratism in every possible way, American leaders held the country's nearly 700,000 Blacks in slavery (census figures of 1790 show the US had a population of 697,624 slaves). The new Constitution further solidified the slave owners' positions, for it recognized the existence of slavery.

Without particular difficulty the slave owners got the Constitutional Convention to pass a national law on fugitive slaves. The law made it mandatory over the entire territory of the USA to give a fugitive slave over to his master. Abetting the flight of slaves, in particular, the harboring of runaway slaves, was regarded as the gravest kind of criminal act. All other details regulating the status of slaves were, as in the first Constitution, left to the individual states. This

resolution was an integral part of the so-called doctrine of states' rights which would in future provide the slave owners with their ideological grounding for opening the Civil War.

The more far-sighted American politicians were well aware that the preservation of slavery would have catastrophic consequences for the United States. James Madison, later to become the USA's fourth President, predicted at the Constitutional Convention that the fight over the slavery issue would inevitably lead the republic to a schism.

The anti-democratic nature of the Constitution was so obvious that people at the time saw it as a threat to the existence of the United States as a republic. Mason, a close friend and political adviser to Washington in the years preceding the Revolutionary War, declared regarding the anti-democratic nature of the 1787 Constitution that the US government would end up as either a monarchy or as a corrupt tyrannical autocracy. Such an outcome was inevitable, he thought, since the Constitution had been written behind the people's back and without consideration of their opinion and interests.

The Constitutional Convention sanctioned the preservation of slavery and even promoted the strengthening of its economic and political positions. "By this failure," wrote William Foster, "besides committing an enormous crime against the Negro people, the bourgeois Revolution of 1776 left a high barrier to the development of the national market and the expansion of industrialization."⁴⁶

Chapter III

THE PERIOD BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

The Russian Public and Slavery in America

The better representatives of the democratic public in Russia sharply criticized the system of enslaving black Americans and had great sympathy for their struggle to gain freedom. This position was not dictated by purely humane considerations alone or the natural striving of any progressive person to speak out against despotism and in defense of the interests of the enslaved people. Internal socio-economic and political factors in Russia's development, suffering as she did under the yoke of serfdom, likewise played an important part. Russian enlighteners identified slavery with serfdom. Mikhail Lomonosov, the most brilliant representative of Russian enlighteners and a poet and scientist with a world name who came from the depths of the people, drew a terrifying picture of slave labor in the mines of America in his 1752 "Letter on the Use of Glass":

*The confusion and fear, fetters, hunger and wounds,
That their tyrants have imposed on them in their work,
Have hindered them from strengthening their abyss underground,*

So that the burden on it might not be moved.

The years have come down on them: they lie entombed in the abyss,

*The unfortunates! Or in truth the blessed,
That suddenly they are beyond all inhuman hands,
Miserable work, abuse, and torment.¹*

Semyon Yefimovich Desnitsky, a famous Russian 18th-century enlightener, said in his "On How to Learn Jurisprudence", published in 1768, that in "North America ... the Europeans are very active in commerce and do business in people just as with cattle or other things".² It was not just chance that Desnitsky, in exposing the vices of slavery, concentrated attention on criticism of the trade in people. Condemning in the censored press the black-slave trade in Amer-

ica, he pointed out to the Russian reader that in Russia, too, the serf owners "do business in people".

The Russian enlightener Alexei Yakovlevich Polenov also protested against the bartering of people. In his work "On the Status of Serfs in Russia" he wrote: "For the glory of the people and the good of society we must rid ourselves of the dishonorable barter of human blood which is being conducted." Polenov stressed that the serf trade makes "little distinction between inanimate objects and man" and that "cattle are pitied more than people".³

The revolutionary outburst in America got lively commentary in the Russian press. The political reaction in Russia during the reign of Catherine the Second (1729-1796) gave no opportunity for candid support for the revolutionary and anti-slavery forces in America to be expressed in the censored Russian press. The political flirtation which Catherine the Second maintained with the French enlighteners, in particular, her correspondence with Voltaire and other French encyclopaedists, and the great financial support she gave them, were all a part of her efforts to be popular within broad social circles in Russia and the West European countries.

The empress attempted to conceal the despotic nature of her regime with liberal phraseology. But her flirtation with enlightened circles in Russia and Western Europe did not further the liberalization of the domestic or foreign policy of the tsarist autocracy. Whenever individual well-meaning comments on the revolutionary events in far-off America turned up in Russian papers, with words of sympathy and good will for the enslaved black Americans, or even more so regarding appeals for their emancipation, they were in allegorical form.

For example, on the eve of the Revolutionary War, the paper *Moskovskiiye vedomosti* (The Moscow Record) published a story which the Russian reader could see only as a slightly veiled parallel between slavery in England's North American colonies and serfdom in Russia. The story voiced clear confidence in the unavoidability of a revolutionary outburst in America and noted that it should be aimed not only at liberating the North American colonies from English colonial oppression, but should also emancipate the black slaves. When you consider that this story was printed at the peak of the Peasant War led by Yemelyan Pugachev (1773-1775), then the authors' amazing civic boldness becomes plain.⁴

After reading such stories no fair-minded reader could help but ask himself: by what right do Russian serf owners hold millions of their white slaves in bondage? Is not the peasants' struggle in Russia for emancipation from serfdom completely legitimate?

It is important to emphasize that even before the American War for Independence started the *Moskovskiye vedomosti* gave much attention to the slavery issue in the North American colonies. The strong influence of the enlightenment, the currents of which were especially evident at Moscow University, was also felt by the paper's editorial board. Botany professor Veniaminov, who was the editor of the *Moskovskiye vedomosti*, maintained close contacts with people of Desnitsky's circle.

The issue concerning the necessity for abolishing slavery in all its manifestations, whether it was black slavery in America or serfdom in Russia, was a key one in the activities of representatives of the Russian enlightenment. It was for this reason that problems relating to the slavery of black Americans were quite well covered on the pages of the *Moskovskiye vedomosti* in the period under consideration.

Anti-slavery sentiments among enlightened Russians were also reflected in the translated literature which they published in Russia. From 1780 to 1782, Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov, the well-known Russian enlightener, writer, journalist, and publisher, put out in Russian translation *Mr. Blackstone's Interpretation of English Laws*.⁵ The book gave detailed evaluations of the problem of slavery and showed its immorality and its complete inconsonance with human nature. The author drew the conclusion that two warnings must be observed when reasoning about any free and sensible manifestations. The first warning was against the introduction of slavery by every means possible. This viewpoint was completely in accord with the opinions of publisher Nikolai Novikov, who was convinced that just relations could be established between representatives of different social groups under the authority of an enlightened monarch. Catherine the Second was not slow to smash this social utopia of Nikolai Novikov's, incarcerating him in the Schlisselburg Fortress in 1792.

The English author's second warning was in keeping with the sentiments of many enlighteners in both Russia and Western Europe: should slavery be introduced, then everything possible must be done to keep slaves from getting weapons,

since otherwise the slaves will be made stronger than the free people.

The English author's position was shared by many of the Russian enlighteners. Two of the greatest revolutionary events of the second half of the 18th century, the great Peasant War in Russia of 1773-1775, and the armed uprisings of the slaves in America, made a certain number of the enlighteners (and not only in Russia) amend their position on slavery. Most Russian enlighteners at the time were from the nobility, hence their radicalism and class consciousness were in constant conflict. They were not in principle against freeing the slaves, but shuddered at the thought that the slaves might get hold of weapons which they would use to fight against all exploiter classes.

The Russian press kept its readers fairly well up to date on events in the American War for Independence and on the disposition of class and political forces in North America. This was consequence, in particular, of the Russian government's anti-English position. Russian landlords, however, reacted negatively to the American "rebels". And although Catherine's policies objectively favored the rebel colonists, this was attributable merely to the fact that the war in North America seriously weakened England's positions, and England was Russia's chief rival at the time.

The Pugachev peasant war had a paralyzing effect on Russia's authorities, which naturally left its imprint on Russian new stories on the slavery problem in the North American colonies. The number of stories on slavery was cut back, although Russian papers did keep reporting on events in America. The *Moskovskiye vedomosti* and *Sanktpeterburgskiy vedomosti*, for example, informed their readers on measures aimed at eliminating slavery in the northern states. The latter paper reported that the state of Massachusetts had decided to "give refuge and defend all the slaves who run away from their lords".⁶ The paper also told how in Pennsylvania it was decreed that "all slave children therein, upon attaining the age of 28, would be freed and declared independent of their former lords".⁷

In August 1783, the *Moskovskiye vedomosti* reported: "The Massachusetts province has promulgated a definition with which it offers its land to all slaves who leave their lords and where they may find patronage."⁸ Two months later the paper inserted information that in Philadelphia a law had been passed according to which "all slave children should receive

their freedom at the age of 29". The paper commented on this law as follows: "It is thought that the Virginia area will follow this splendid example."⁹

At the height of the Peasant War (1773-1775), when the flight of serfs from their owners became quite commonplace (runaway serfs made up the core of Pugachev's army), the very mention of a Massachusetts law granting refuge to fugitive slaves was a bold demonstration of radicalism. In the same issue, the *Moskovskiiye vedomosti* wrote on measures by the US Congress to cut off the delivery of black slaves to the United States from Africa.

Only two newspapers which were mentioned above were published in Russia at the time of the American Revolution—the *Moskovskiiye vedomosti* and the *Sanktpeterburgskiiye vedomosti*. The latter was the official organ and, understandably enough, gave very little attention to the problem of slavery in America. The reason for this was readily apparent: any mention of slavery in America involuntarily caused the reader to draw parallels with serfdom in Russia, which was hardly what the landowners wanted.

The *Moskovskiiye vedomosti*, put out by Moscow University, printed far more stories on slavery in America. This paper was less tied to official circles, which left its impress on the stories and commentaries it printed about the Revolutionary War in general and the Negro problem in particular. Issues printed from 1779 to 1789 are of especial interest, as Nikolai Novikov was editor then.

The content of the stories published in the paper changed considerably over this time. It gave a far more objective and thorough account of events overseas, including the Negro problem, than its St. Petersburg counterpart. Nevertheless, it strikes us as amiss to completely identify Novikov's views on the American Revolution with the stories and editorials in the paper he edited. One must make allowance for the sharp censorship which ruled in feudal Russia, especially after the suppression of Pugachev's uprising.

The trade by Russian landlords in live goods elicited especially negative reactions from Russia's progressive public. Therefore, whenever Russian papers informed the reader about the struggle with the slave trade in the US, one could read between the lines an only slightly masked protest against the trading in people in Russia. The number of publications condemning the black-slave trade in America was large. The *Moskovskiiye vedomosti*, for example, published a Supplement

which often posed this problem in a sharply condemnatory form. In one of these Supplements of 1784 there appeared an article entitled, "The Notion of Bartering in Slaves". It was printed in the form of "A Letter from a Traveller to His Friends".

The beginning of the article sharply rebuked the entire system of trading in slaves as "unpardonable". The author wrote: "Only base mercenaries could agree to this inhumanity and human ethics opposes it. The law of nature cannot justify this degradation of mankind."¹⁰ Next, however, the article's author makes note of some positive points of the slave trade. One is to assume that the line of argument was advanced by the slave owner. In any event, the arguments for the slave trade are very reminiscent of those used by slave owners to justify both slavery and the slave trade. The article says that prisoners, debtors, criminals—people "found guilty under the laws of their homeland"—usually become slaves. From this the author concludes: "The bartering in slaves preserves many people; through it they are made useful co-members of entire nations; they are taken out of their ignorance and transformed into better people than they were in their homeland."

We note an odd contradiction in reading the article: the author reflects on the beneficence of slavery and the civilizing mission of slaveholding, but at the end points to the necessity of treating the slaves philanthropically so as to avert the danger that they might "try to liberate themselves from their misfortune by our ruin". The accent on this aspect of slavery is highly significant. The idea that action on the part of the slaves might bring "ruin" to their owners was quite appropriate to Russian reality, since it was just at that time that the flame of the great peasant war was flaring up across the enormous expanses of the Russian Empire.

How did the editorial board react to the highly urgent problems the article raised? The board appended its position as follows: "We feel this letter deserves publication, as it has been written by a thoughtful eye-witness." Conceding certain realistic assertions by the author, the editors nevertheless unambiguously opposed the main pro-slavery argument put forward in the article. They further said that even though the paper was printing the reasoning on the good of "trading in slaves, we do not agree with that reasoning, for it is based on many false conclusions". Why were the author's assertions "false"? The board wrote in its appended note:

"This is not the place to look into whether many slaves are being stolen from their land, whether or not they are all criminals, whether their condition is improving or they might someday be happy in the servitude of Europeans or whether they are commonly treated in the most terrifying manner."

The note concluded with the firm assertion that the enslavement of man by man was illegal: "Excuses that we perpetrate similar injustices in Europe and that by bartering slaves we do much good which would not otherwise be done are excuses which do not stand up to the test of rationale and humankind and do not prove the justice of right which white people claim to have over their black brothers, as well."¹¹ It is obvious that in both form and content the editors' note ran counter to serfdom. This left no doubt that Russian publishers used events in far-away America to once again attract the attention of the progressive Russian public to the problems of fighting against serfdom.

The anti-slavery and anti-serfdom sentiments of the *Moskovskiye vedomosti's* publishers are also apparent from analyzing the foreign literature that the paper translated for its readers. One of the Supplements of 1784 included an article by a certain German professor which talked about the impact the liberation of the United areas of North America had on Europe's political scene. The article was of great interest primarily because it gave an exceptionally high political estimation of the American Revolution: "The declaration of independence of the United areas of North America belongs to the most important adventures of our era."¹²

The lengthy article was published in several issues of the Supplement and considered various kinds of problems in the domestic and foreign-policy situation of the first independent state in America. A large amount of attention was given, in particular, to the black slave problem in the United States. The German professor insisted that slavery was incompatible with the form of national government created by the Revolution in the American colonies: "With North America's becoming independent and free, and the more so a democratic entity, slavery, in my opinion, should be as contrary to the North American form of government as to any European."¹³ He then told about slavery's abolition in Pennsylvania and expressed the hope that other states would follow its example. His argument in favor of slavery's abolition in the US was shaped by the following considerations: the constant danger of black slave rebellions, their rather

high cost, and the possibility of substituting black slave labor by poor white immigrants from Europe.

Alexander Nikolayevich Radishchev (1749-1802), the Russian revolutionary thinker and writer, was an ardent opponent of slavery and serfdom. In his famed work, *A Trip from Petersburg to Moscow*, written in the mid-1780s, he wrote: "The Europeans, having ravaged America and fattened its fields on the blood of its native inhabitants, have put an end to their murders by new mercenariness..." Radishchev opposed not only the wiping out of the native Indian population, but also the enslavement of Africans, and was particularly against the black slave trade. He wrote that the black slaves brought over from Africa "under the heavy stick of order work the rich fields of America, which disdains their labor". The Russian revolutionary thinker was also strongly opposed to American customs which allowed "one hundred proud citizens to wallow in luxury, while thousands of others have no hope of feeding themselves or finding their own refuge from heat and cold".¹⁴ Like other Russian democrats, Radishchev wrote that serfdom in Russia and slavery in America were socio-political phenomena of the same type. He was highly critical of serfdom in Russia, where "two-thirds of the citizens are deprived of civil rights and of the protection under the law".¹⁵ In his ode "Liberty", Radishchev celebrated the American Revolution and its leader, George Washington:

"O, Warrior resolute,
You were and are unconquerable,
Your leader is freedom, Washington!"

It is important to emphasize that Radishchev, who highly esteemed the Revolution in America, also saw one of its chief flaws—the attempt to perpetuate the slavery of black Americans undertaken by the US Founding Fathers. Radishchev's prose and poetry are among the most outstanding works of their time because they gave a thorough socio-political analysis of the American Revolution and they critically evaluated the bourgeois-planter bloc's policies of enslaving black Americans. Radishchev's works and his opposition to slavery in America and serfdom in Russia provide the most convincing testimony that the best representatives of the Russian public were keenly sympathetic to the enslaved black Americans and tried to prove the moral, political, and economic necessity of emancipating them.

"The Unavoidable Conflict"

It is difficult to find an analogy in world history where a revolution which so favorably affected the history of an entire continent and had such great international significance was, at the same time, so circumscribed in its social consequences for the most oppressed part of the population—the black slaves.

The Revolution led to the abolition of slavery in the northern states, but this was in no way an act of beneficence by the Whites toward the Blacks, as apologists for slavery during the American Revolution claimed and as bourgeois historians today maintain. US ruling classes have never taken important social or political steps unless the most crying necessity dictated them to do so and unless these steps promised immediate or long-term economic, political, and other dividends. As was stated earlier, slavery was economically disadvantageous in the North, and as it simply did not pay off, it was consequently doomed. But those losses which the bourgeois-planter alliance sustained were more than compensated for by slavery's burgeoning development in the South after the Revolution. There were the most serious economic and political reasons for this.

By preserving slavery, the Founding Fathers placed a time bomb under the new republic. Sooner or later this bomb was bound to explode, and this entailed a deadly threat to the very existence of the Union. Only the leaders of the bourgeois-planter bloc, who were blinded by greed and for whom the profits they made off exploiting black slaves were more important than the nation's fate, would not understand this.

Any revolution leads to a serious change in society's class structure and greatly amplifies class differentiation. This is a lengthy process in no way complete with the armed seizure of power by the leading class in the revolution. During and after the American Revolution, this process developed largely as a consolidation of slavery and anti-slavery forces. The anti-slavery movement, which started activating itself during the Revolution, continued gaining strength after the Revolutionary War, as well, when Abolitionist societies were formed and began consolidating their forces in an organized manner.

A certain measure of unity between white and black opponents of slavery had been achieved during the war. This is evidenced by the creation, in 1775, of the first local anti-

slavery society in America in Philadelphia, a society still extant today. Benjamin Franklin was its organizer and soul. The Negro problem had been quite important during the war, so it is not surprising that after it was over Abolitionist societies cropped up in quite a few states. A similar society was founded in New York in 1785, in Rhode Island in 1786, in Maryland in 1789, in Connecticut in 1790, in Virginia in 1791, and in New Jersey and Pennsylvania in 1792.¹⁶ These societies existed in nearly all the states by 1792. A convention of these societies was held in Philadelphia in 1794 and drew representatives from ten states. It passed a resolution condemning slavery and the slave trade and petitioned Congress to repeal slavery. A resolution was passed to hold a convention of anti-slavery societies every year. Free Blacks were active in these societies.

The Abolitionist movement linked the Revolutionary War with the Civil War of 1861-1865. It was highly important in the struggle for the democratic right of the American people, and the Negro question was the most important one within this struggle. The Abolitionist traditions of the first American revolution were taken up by a new generation who fought for and abolished the slavery of Blacks in the course of the second American revolution.

The paradox of the American Revolution was that, in casting off the chains of English colonial rule, it shackled every fifth citizen of the first independent state in America to the chains of slavery. This was why Franklin and other Abolitionists were completely within their rights in accusing Congress of sanctioning the preservation of slavery.

Many years later Frederick Engels drew attention to this flagrant contradiction in American history. "It is significant...", he wrote, "that the American Constitution, the first to recognize the rights of man, in the same breath confirms the slavery of the coloured races existing in America: class privileges are proscribed, race privileges sanctioned."¹⁷

The contradiction between slavery and freedom was not only repugnant, as Franklin put it, but was extremely dangerous, as well. Slavery in the bourgeois republic was an example of an incompatibility that would inevitably lead in future to the tearing away of slavery from the US state as an archaic institution hindering the social progress of American society. Eminent representatives of the Abolitionist movement realized this and pointed out more than once that emancipation of the slaves was in accord with the class interests

not only of black Americans, but of the entire American people.

The Abolitionists' struggle for the elimination of slavery is one of the brightest pages in the history of the American anti-slavery movement. But if one considers Abolitionism as the struggle for the emancipation of the slaves, then the most important and effective form of this movement was the anti-slavery action of black Americans themselves. The selfless struggle of Afro-Americans for their freedom is the most persuasive testimony of the groundlessness of claims by reactionary American historians that it was only the good will of the Whites that gave rise to the possibility of emancipating the black slaves. Such falsifications look backward to the past, but are intended for our times. Their goal is to paralyze the will of Blacks to fight.

The entire progressive public of Europe followed the war of England's North American colonies for independence. Benjamin Franklin wrote from Paris: "All Europe is on our side of the question, as far as applause and good wishes can carry them... Hence, 'tis a common observation here, that our cause is *the cause of all Mankind*, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own."¹⁸ Franklin's assessment of the international significance of the American Revolution was wholly in keeping with reality.

Eighty years separate the two American revolutions. The most important characteristic of this period of US history, noted Marx, was the presence within one state of "two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour".¹⁹

The casting off of colonial dependence promoted a rapid growth of the US economy, which developed at an especially feverish rate from 1840 to 1860. By 1860, the United States had taken over fourth place in the world in volume of industrial production. On the eve of the Civil War, industrial and agricultural products had nearly drawn even in cost.

The rapid quantitative growth of industrial production was accompanied by profound qualitative changes in the country's economy. The manufactory stage in capitalism's development was replaced by the period of machine production. This transition was accompanied by important changes in the structure of the gainfully employed population. The industrial proletariat was rapidly growing; the class struggle between workers and the bourgeoisie was exacerbated;

ed; and the worker, trade union, and farm movement expanded.

Slavery held full sway in the South. After the slave trade was prohibited in 1807 and the influx of new slaves from Africa sharply curtailed, the problem of work hands became extremely acute for the planters.²⁰ The solution was found in "rearing" slaves for sale. A number of states specialized in this filthy business: Virginia, Missouri, Maryland, Kentucky, and Delaware.

Slavery was given a powerful economic boost at this time. In England and other European countries, and later in the United States, an industrial revolution began which also encompassed the textile industry. The demand for cotton jumped. But cotton production was hampered by the laborious procedure of cleaning the plant. In 1793, however, the cotton gin was invented and the problem solved. This led to celerious growth in the manufacture of this most important raw material for the textile industry. From 1793 through 1853, the production of cotton went up by more than 700 times and by 1859 comprised 4,309,642 bales (at 500 lbs. a bale).

In spite of all the differences in the economies of the North and South, to a large extent they complemented one another. The southern states were an economic adjunct to the industrial North, supplying it with cotton for its rapidly developing textile industry. Industrial circles in the North were no less interested than the southern plantation owners in exploiting the black slaves. New York's bourgeoisie, for example, made 40 percent of its profit before the Civil War on the sale of cotton raised in the South.²¹ The North in turn sent the South bread, industrial wares, and various consumer goods. The southern states also received much of vital necessity for them from England.

The USA's historical development between the two revolutions was unique in that, due to a large number of factors, the political power which the bourgeoisie in the North commanded did not correspond to the decisive economic positions which it occupied in the country. Seventy-two years separate the presidencies of two great Americans, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. For 50 of those years, the slave owners had one of their men in the President's office. Of 35 Supreme Court Justices chosen over that time, 20 were from the South. Of 23 Speakers of the House, 13 were slave owners.²² Frederick Douglass, the outstanding leader

of the 19th-century Negro liberation movement in the United States, wrote: "The Masters of the slaves have been the masters of the Republic. Their authority was almost undisputed, and their power irresistible."²³

To a certain extent, slavery stimulated the development of capitalism in the early phase of American history. However, with the exception of hired labor, the basis of capitalist production, slavery gradually became an impediment to the further development of capitalist production relations. The contradictions between these two systems became more severe in the economic sphere and spread more and more into politics. In the struggle for power the bourgeoisie and the slave owners were irreconcilable antagonists. Marx wrote that the struggle between North and South was "the general formula of the United States history since the beginning of this century [19th century—*R.I.*]"²⁴

The contradictions between slavery and capitalism enveloped both domestic and foreign policy. The slave owners were primarily interested in southward expansion since, without taking up new lands undepleted by predatory working, slavery could not exist. Expansion to the north and west was what interested the bourgeoisie most. The problem was solved by compromise. It was decided to expand in all directions, which suited both the bourgeoisie and the slave owners. It is characteristic that the south remained the chief direction of American expansionism, which once more outlined the real correlation of forces between two systems fighting for power.

On foreign-policy matters, the slave owners and bourgeoisie as a rule found a common ground, which could not be said about the fundamental problems of domestic policies. The contradictions there were highly antagonistic. The bourgeoisie needed the creation of a single national market and the introduction of a high import tariff which would shield the country's developing industry from European competitors. They also wanted to see the western lands developed by free farmers.

The solution of these problems would imperil the economic and political interests of the slave owners. The colonization of the western lands was an especially thorny matter. The balance of power in Congress and hence the nation's future course depended on whether new states created in the vast western region came into the Union as free states or as slave states.

The Missouri Compromise, concluded in 1820, stipulated that all territories entering the Union south of 36°30' latitude would be open for slavery, while all states to the north would be for free farmers. This meant that new states to the south of the parallel would be slave and to the north, free. To preserve political equilibrium the Compromise provided for admitting one free state into the Union for every slave state let in. On the whole, the Compromise was a concession to the slave owners.

The bourgeoisie and slave owners did everything possible to keep their differences strictly "within the family" by preventing the participation of workers, farmers, and black Americans in the resolution of contentious issues. But despite all the obstacles, the role of the people in resolving these important problems steadily grew. This is witnessed by the activization of the workers' movement, the flood of free colonists moving west, and the rise of the Negro liberation movement.

The culmination of the Negro movement of the 1820s-1830s were the slave uprisings of Denmark Vesey in 1822 and Nat Turner in 1831.²⁵ The Afro-American movement was further helped along by Abolitionist sentiments in the North and the revolutions in Haiti and Europe. Two large-scale uprisings by Blacks in less than ten years shocked the planters to action. They were draconian in their treatment of the rebels. In the southern states a curfew was imposed, free Blacks were forbidden from leaving for neighboring states, the penalties for teaching Blacks how to read and write were increased, and the number of religious meetings by Blacks was greatly cut back. The South quickly turned into a kind of armed military camp. Numerous additional troop contingents were quartered there and an especially large amount of artillery was brought out. The slave owners were obviously trying to resolve by force of arms the highly complex group of socio-political problems of the Negro people.

In the 1830s, the Abolitionist movement, with representatives from the most diverse classes and groups of the population in it, became much more vigorous. The movement's revolutionary wing was just gathering momentum. Moderates, led by William Lloyd Garrison, were in the majority. They obviously overestimated the efficacy of moral means of combatting slavery and opposed armed revolutionary methods of fighting slavery.

Despite the inconsistency and contradictoriness of Garrison's views on liberating the black slaves and on the principles the Abolitionist movement should be built on, Garrison made a great contribution to the movement's development. The weakest point in the strategy and tactics of the Moderate wing of the Abolitionists was the underestimation of the Negro liberation movement by its leaders. Garrison did not see slave uprisings as an important means of fighting against slavery. He was against the creation of Negro organizations and their printing activities within the framework of the Abolitionist movement.²⁶

The revolutionary wing of the Abolitionists favored all means of combatting slavery and drawing Negroes themselves into the fight. Their leader, Frederick Douglass, as early as 1849 came out strongly in favor of slave uprisings. He saw them as a most important way of fighting for slavery's abolition, and resolutely supported the joint action of white and black enemies of slavery, as well.

Douglass played a significant part in the Negro liberation movement. His authority was great. Hundreds of thousands of Blacks followed him and believed in him. Douglass had himself been a slave in youth and personally experienced all the horrors of slavery. He well knew what hard labor under the overseer's scourge was, and what hunger, torture, and constant humiliation were like. Douglass hardly remembered his mother, and his birth date of 1817 is only approximate. Douglass' mother was black, his father, white—probably the owner of the plantation where she worked. Like the vast majority of slaves, Douglass did not even have a last name; he took the name Douglass only after escaping to the North.

Douglass was well aware of the price of freedom. When his first escape attempt failed, he was dragged for several miles behind a horse, then beaten unconscious and thrown into jail. Even later, in the free North, racists more than once attacked Douglass and tried to lynch him. He was in his complete moral rights to claim later in his autobiography that his feet were so cracked from frost that the pen he was writing with could fit into the wounds.

In 1838, Douglass attempted a second escape, this time a successful one. Once in the North, he became involved in the Abolitionist movement. Highly gifted by nature, Douglass was marked by rare industriousness. He doggedly pursued his self-education and soon became known in both the US

and abroad as a brilliant publicist and speaker and an irreconcilable fighter for the freedom of Blacks.

Differences within the Abolitionist movement greatly weakened it. However, in spite of its shortcomings, this great popular movement played an important part in the ideological and organizational preparation of the anti-slavery movement on a nationwide scale. The year 1833 was an important landmark in the history of Abolitionism, as it was in that year that the American Anti-slavery Society was formed. This was the start of the organized stage of the Abolitionist movement. The Society, which numbered 250,000 members, published 25 newspapers and journals.

Even the moderate members among the Abolitionists did not confine themselves to agitation against slavery. They actively participated in the organization of slave escapes from the southern states. Many thousands of fugitive slaves were helped along the so-called Underground Railroad to the North and Canada. It was called the Underground Railroad because there was a law effective throughout the North which stipulated, under penalty of criminal proceedings, that fugitive slaves had to be turned over to their masters. For this reason, fugitive slaves were helped to escape to Canada clandestinely, "underground", as the Abolitionists liked to put it figuratively.

Uprisings, plots, running away from the plantations—these and other forms used by the slaves to try to gain their freedom, along with the growing activity of the Abolitionists, stirred the public's interest in the Negro problem which, on the eve of the Civil War, had become a key issue throughout the nation. Slavery's economic unprofitability—holding back the development of capitalism—was becoming more and more obvious. The vital interests of millions of Blacks, the class interests of the bourgeoisie, free farmers, workers, and tradesmen—all pressingly demanded the stepping up of the fight against slavery.

Slavery was being struck from both front and rear. The Abolitionist movement, unfolding chiefly in the northern states, was the outer front of the struggle against slavery. The inner anti-slavery front cut across all the slave states of the South. The fighters on this front were the hundreds of thousands of slaves and free Blacks who convincingly demonstrated their determination to make an open stand for the complete elimination of slavery. The time had come for an explosion. The prevision of the leaders of America's first revolu-

tion, who foresaw that slavery would lead to the most serious consequences for the United States, had come true.

A guerilla war was waged in Kansas from 1854 to 1856 which became a prologue to the Civil War. It was the first serious test of strength in the armed struggle between slavery's opponents and adherents. John Brown's revolt took place in October 1859. Brown was a recognized Abolitionist who had participated in the Kansas fighting and who, at the head of a small mixed detachment of Blacks and Whites, seized the government arsenal in the little town of Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown's intention was to distribute the captured weapons to the slaves and spread revolt throughout the slave states. His plans were not destined to be realized, however. He was surrounded by overwhelming military forces and his detachment almost completely annihilated. Brown, seriously wounded, was captured, stood trial, and hung.

The intensification of the struggle over the Negro problem and Brown's courageous conduct at his trial drew the attention of the American and international public. Brown's trial became a political trial of slavery. Marx wrote of Brown's revolt: "In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America, started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the slaves in Russia."²⁷

Reactionary historians attempt to present John Brown's revolt as a small episode in the history of the struggle with slavery and its leader as a mentally unbalanced person. In reality, the importance of the revolt was enormous. Brown's small detachment was comprised of white and black enemies of slavery. For the first time in US history, a white man led an armed uprising against slavery. This was evidence of the fact that the anti-slavery movement had entered a new stage, a stage where Whites and Blacks would fight together against slavery. "Thirty-six hours after Brown's attempt to lead a mass Negro insurrection, the action was over," wrote an American historian. "But for Virginia, and the South, the effects were just beginning."²⁸

Brown's revolt and execution made their imprint on the entire course of the crucially important election campaign of 1860. They signified that the period of compromises, each of which meant another capitulation by the industrial North to the slave South, was over in US history.

The Republican Party was formed in 1854, attesting to a certain consolidation of the anti-slavery forces. But the radicalism of the Republican leaders on the Negro question did not extend farther than to limiting slavery to the area where it already existed.

Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, won the Presidential election of 1860. He shared the cautious and altogether moderate position of the party leadership on the slavery issue. But even the Republicans' moderate program held a serious threat to slavery, which could exist only by being continuously spread to new territories.

Slavery was based on predatory land use: the slave owners hardly ever used fertilizers or any kind of elaborate agricultural tools. Such barbarous use of the land quickly led to the depletion of the soil. The land was then abandoned and the slave owners moved on to new, undepleted lands.

Lincoln's victory in the election made the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the slave owners over the slavery question truly unavoidable. The slave owners thought a Civil War inevitable. The results of the 1860 election campaign convinced them that they would no longer be able to exploit the Union of states in their selfish, class interests. Without stopping to think for a minute, they exploded this Union from within. The southern states declared they were seceding from the Union and on February 6, 1861 they formed a new nation—the Confederate States. On April 13, 1861, the Confederacy's armed forces attacked and captured Fort Sumter, which federal troops had been protecting. The Civil War had begun.

Chapter IV

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

Slavery—the Main Problem of the Revolution

Secession and the Civil War that ensued were acts of treason on the part of the rebel slave owners. Robert E. Lee, who would soon become well known as one of the Confederacy's military leaders, disliked secessions. He said that "secession is nothing but revolution".¹

The Confederacy's leaders justified secession from the Union by referring to the doctrine of states' rights. They believed that this doctrine not only provided for the right of states to withdraw from the Union, but for the preservation of slavery, as well. This is how the slave owners who began the Civil War justified their actions. The Confederacy's leaders openly declared their goal to be the destruction of capitalism in the North and the spreading of slavery not only over the whole of the United States, but also into neighboring countries. Frederick Douglass declared that the slave owners "make no secret as to the cause of this war, and they do not conceal the purpose of the war. That purpose is nothing more or less than to make the slavery of the African race universal and perpetual on this continent."²

After the initiation of military actions, the bourgeoisie of the North nurtured plans of resolving outstanding issues by compromising with the rebel slave owners. Their position derived from their fear that large numbers of working people would get involved in the conflict and from their desire to keep the conflict localized and get it over with quickly. The inertia of many years of compromise politics over outstanding problems between the slave owners and the bourgeoisie was taking its toll.

The North's goals in the war were most fully and succinctly formulated in the Congressional resolution of July 22, 1861. The resolution said that the war was not being carried on for the purpose of wiping out slavery, but rather to defend and uphold the supreme power of the Constitution and to preserve

the Union.³ The war would be terminated as soon as these goals were achieved. These goals were completely impractical: a great rift had taken place in the nation and a revolutionary struggle had become unavoidable. An American historian has written: "We can paraphrase John Adams's famous comment on the American Revolution [1775-1783—*R.I.*] and apply it to the coming of the Civil War—the separation was complete, in the minds of the people."⁴ The nation was split into two camps: those openly favoring and those openly opposing slavery. The "inevitable conflict" had grown into the Civil War.

The North had the great advantage in overall strength. The population of the 11 Confederate states was nine million, with five million⁵ of them being Whites and nearly four million being slaves. There were 22 million people living in the 23 states which remained faithful to the Union. The northern states were the industrial heart of the United States, turning out 75 percent of the country's industrial production. Lincoln's government was able to count on the support of broad masses of the people and they in truth did support it.

The rebel slave owners formed an oligarchic regime relying basically on their own narrow circle. They considered slavery to be the most effective weapon the South could use against the North. They were counting on putting together a 600,000-strong white army and on efficiently using slaves for work on the home front. These plans were not fated to be realized. Slaves and free Blacks regarded the Civil War as a most auspicious moment for stepping up the fight against slavery. The rebels were compelled to leave a military force of 100,000 to guard the slaves, thereby seriously weakening their chances in the war.

Beginning with the first months of the war, the Abolitionists consolidated their ranks, which helped in shoring up the North's position in the struggle against the rebels. The Emancipation League was formed in November 1861, uniting all wings of the Abolitionist movement. William Garrison, the Abolitionists' leader, had been advocating the non-resistance to slavery, but after the war began he changed his position, declaring that his heart beat in unison with the hearts of all people of the North.

The demand for the slaves' emancipation was being heard more and more even among the moderate Abolitionists. The unification of the Abolitionists was all the more necessary since influential political circles in the North considered

secession a legal act. After the Confederacy adopted a temporary constitution, Horace Greeley, the publisher of the *New York Tribune*, announced that, in accordance with the Declaration of Independence, "if the Slave States, the Cotton States, or the Gulf States only, choose to form an independent nation, they have a clear moral right to do so". The *Cincinnati Commercial*, a leading Western journal, put forth a similar viewpoint: "We would recognize the existence of a Government formed of all the slaveholding States, and attempt to cultivate amicable relations with it."⁶

Frederick Douglass resolutely favored slavery's immediate elimination. He insisted that the war would be decided not only on the battlefield, but on the political front, as well. Douglass pointed to the necessity of using revolutionary methods in the war. He wrote: "Let the slaves and free colored people be called into service, and formed into a liberating army, to march into the South and raise the banner of Emancipation among the slaves."⁷ Douglass thought armed uprising the most effective means of fighting for slavery's abolition. Bypassing the US government, he appealed directly to the Blacks to make an armed fight for their freedom.

Slavery was the central problem of the Civil War from the very beginning. The federal government's tactics of compromise and wait-and-see could not avert the inevitable—the abolition of slavery. Even at the start of the war its future development was obvious to many observers. Soon after the war began, a correspondent for a Russian newspaper reported from the US: "The struggle will be a horrible one and events of tremendous significance in our century will be its result. Among its principal consequences will be the abolition of slavery. This result could never be achieved peacefully, so great is the abyss separating the North and the South!"⁸

By starting the Civil War, the planters placed slavery outside the law, in effect, signing its death warrant. The attack by the authorities of South Carolina, challenging the United States government, decided in advance the fate of the newly born Confederacy and the institution of slavery.⁹ In view of the North's tremendously lopsided advantage, the rebel slave owners could count on success in the war only by tightly uniting all the southern states which supported slavery. The Confederacy's leaders managed to achieve success, which permitted them to carry on a determined

armed struggle for four years against the superior forces of the North.

The northern states were not unified over what the war's aims were or how it should be conducted. The bourgeoisie was split up into a number of factions and groupings, and among a certain part of the bourgeoisie strong pro-slave sentiments were held. The split in the bourgeoisie had all the more negative after-effects as it was the leading force in the second American revolution. Sharp differences between various groupings within the bourgeoisie left a negative imprint on all the federal government's policies. These differences were most palpable on the slavery issue and on what stance the federal government should take on the Negro problem during the second American revolution.

At stake in the Civil War were issues which should determine the country's future. Nevertheless, in spite of the crisis situation which had evolved, the bourgeoisie of the North was unable to put up any more or less united and effective leadership against the solidified oligarchy of the slave South. It took four years of the bloodiest warfare the country had ever known and terrible defeats in battle, which often brought the North to the brink of disaster, before the federal government switched over to revolutionary methods of conducting the war. It was only this new military and political course which ensured the abolition of slavery and the military defeat of the rebel slave owners.

In initiating the Civil War, the slave owners faced first of all the problem of securing the Confederacy at home. Many of them were counting on being able to maintain if not the loyalty, then at least the neutrality of Blacks in the conflict. A few of the more optimistic planters were even hoping to draft Blacks into the army. Such hopes were completely groundless, however. The correspondent of a Russian newspaper was entirely correct when he wrote from the US that "many have noted that the owners [of slaves—*R.I.*] could arm the slaves, but one wonders: would it be easy to disarm them?"¹⁰ As slaves began activating their struggle in the rear of the rebel Confederacy, the slave owners were quickly compelled to resort to a tried and true method of solving the Negro problem—the most heinous terror. The Abolitionist journal *The Liberator* wrote soon after the war started that the slave owners had greatly stepped up their terror against Blacks. They feared that Blacks would break loose of their chains and turn them into weapons.

5 The South was a huge, carefully guarded torture chamber for the Blacks during the Civil War. Keeping order in this gigantic concentration camp required considerable military efforts on the part of the rebels. The Confederacy used 100,000 troops to keep the slaves in line. An armed overseer was appointed for every group of 15-20 slaves. All roads were patrolled by armed detachments of slave owners. Right after the war began the rebels set up a so-called internal guard—a militarized organization which was to keep guard over the slaves.

The Negro problem during the Civil War had specific features. During the Revolutionary War, Blacks stood at a kind of crossroads. Both combatants did all they could to try to use them in their own interests and make them fight for their side. The downtrodden, illiterate slave was hard put to figure out who was right and which side he should take: both the Americans and the English promised him freedom. But during the Civil War, Blacks had no problem in making a political choice. The slave owners did not think it necessary to conceal that they were fighting for the preservation and perpetuation of slavery. This was why right after military actions commenced, Blacks in the South used every way they could to gain their freedom: armed uprisings, plots, flight from the plantations, sabotage, and so on. Reports of increased actions by the Blacks came in from virtually all the rebellious states.

Afro-Americans received Lincoln's election to the Presidency enthusiastically. The illiterate slaves did not much understand the Republicans' party platform, but they believed that Lincoln's victory would bring them liberty. Such confidence was all the more meaningful, as a number of factors gave evidence that the federal authorities did not intend on freeing the slaves. Brigadier General T.W. Sherman of the federal army in an address to the people of South Carolina on November 8, 1861 declared that the North's army would not interfere in the South's internal affairs and, in particular, in the slave-slave owner relationship.¹¹ The vast majority of generals in the US Army held a clearly delineated anti-Negro position. Moreover, many of these generals later commanded numerous Negro regiments, gained important victories with their involvement, and acknowledged the large part that black soldiers played in the defeat of the rebels. One such general was General B.F. Butler. In the first days of the war, though, the 8th

Massachusetts regiment put down a black uprising in Maryland on his orders. Instances are known when the US military took part in shameful police actions—the catching of fugitive slaves. Sometimes federal troops opened fire on fugitive slaves.¹²

People in the North loudly protested the unlawful anti-Negro acts of the US Army's reactionary generals. The *New York Daily Tribune* published in May 1861 one of many protest letters it had received from readers. It reasonably asked the question: if the federal army does not turn over rebel deserters who come over to its side, why should it do so with black slaves?

It is significant that the sympathies of ordinary soldiers in the federal army were quite frequently on the side of fugitive slaves, whom they tried to help all they could despite the commanders' orders to the contrary. Soldiers from Wisconsin, for example, collected money for fugitive slaves from their meager army salary. Soldiers from the 12th New York regiment concealed fugitive slaves and arrested their masters when they came to fetch them. Soldiers indignantly refused to accept money offered to them for slaves by planters. They declared they would never take part in the capture of fugitive slaves.

The absurdity of the federal government's position on the slavery question became obvious in the very first weeks of the war. Thousands of slaves, risking their lives and enduring great tribulations, fled from their masters, crossed the frontlines, and gathered in the zone adjoining the front. The problem developed of what to do with this chattel of the slave owners. They could not be returned to the South, as this would only strengthen the Confederacy's army. But what was to be done with them, and who would feed them? It was also not clear what was to be done with slaves of rebel slave owners on Confederate territory occupied by federal troops.

It was General Butler who came up with the solution to this thorny problem. In June 1861, he refused to return three fugitive slaves to their master, a colonel in the Confederate army, since they were being used by rebels to build fortifications. Butler declared them spoils of war. The fugitive slaves were given the chance, for an appropriate remuneration, of working for his troops. Butler was fully justified in declaring that the Fugitive Slave Law applied only within the United States and that Virginia had with-

drawn from the Union. He made sure to add, though, that all fugitive slaves would be returned to their masters without delay if the latter took an oath of allegiance to the United States.¹³

Butler's initiative was approved by the federal government and made an impression on Lincoln. A lawyer by profession, the President always tried to scrupulously observe the letter of the law. Butler's solution did not formally abrogate the federal law on turning fugitive slaves over to their masters, but it reduced its effect to virtually nothing, which was of great import to the North after the Civil War had begun. Butler was supported by other generals in the army, who also began making plentiful use of fugitive slaves on various jobs. Settlements of fugitive slaves gradually started building up on the self-supporting principle. The Blacks not only got used to new labor conditions, but also got their first chance at practicing self-rule. The skills they developed in this regard were to become crucial to them after their emancipation.

Even during the war years, Lincoln's government was punctilious in observing the principle of private property. Property, even the enemy's, was something sacred to the bourgeoisie. The federal government sanctioned Butler's initiative, but hastened to stipulate that his actions were not to affect the question of slavery's existence in the southern states. This was an unambiguous demonstration of class solidarity by the bourgeoisie and the slave owners.

A similar policy was clearly evident in the case of General Fremont, as well. Fremont was not only a well-known politician, having run as the Republicans' first candidate for the Presidency in the election of 1856, he was also an eminent military commander and outstanding scientist, as well as a fearless traveler who made a great contribution to the study of the Far West. The northern generals were not spoiled by the fortunes of war at the war's outset, and so the successful operations that Fremont conducted in the first few weeks of the war reverberated all the more loudly. Many generals of the North who would later become well known in their own right started their military careers under Fremont's command: Grand, Sherman, Pope, McLermand, and others. Fremont's position on the Negro question, being the view of a man held in great authority, was of tremendous importance. On August 30, 1861, Fremont published a Proclamation on the Emancipation of the Slaves. It amounted

to the imposition of martial law throughout the state of Missouri, where his troops were stationed. All rebel property, including slaves, was confiscated and the slaves were declared free.¹⁴

Lincoln politely but firmly demanded that Fremont repeal his Proclamation on the Emancipation of the Slaves. Fremont categorically refused to do so. The President could do nothing else but take upon himself all the moral and political costs of a very unpopular decision in radical circles: he ordered Fremont to repeal his Proclamation. Fremont's Proclamation was an important stage in the development of the anti-slavery movement. While Butler repealed the Fugitive Slave Law, it was Fremont who took the first practical steps toward liberating the slaves. After publishing his Proclamation, Fremont became the target for persecution. The huge military bureaucracy was set in motion against him. One commission followed another, with each finding all kinds of flaws in the General's conduct. Thoroughly defamed, Fremont was forced to retire on November 2, 1861. Fremont's removal caused loud reverberations. The army reacted very morbidly to his retirement: there were disturbances among soldiers that Fremont had commanded.

As a radical solution to the slavery problem, Fremont's Proclamation had one substantial drawback: it granted freedom only to the slaves of rebel slave owners; loyal slave owners maintained all rights to their chattel. The correspondent for a Russian newspaper wrote in this regard: "Even Fremont, one of the most noble people in the United States, did not proclaim slavery's complete abolition, limiting himself to declaring that those who would not submit to the federal government would lose their slaves. That's how they regarded history and human progress in America!"¹⁵

Fremont's Proclamation and its subsequent repeal, the violent reaction of the left to the popular General's retirement, and the activization of the Black emancipation movement—all were evidence that the struggle over the slavery problem had become yet more fierce. The repeal of Fremont's Proclamation was merely a postponement in slavery's death sentence.

Black Americans in the Civil War

The war was obviously becoming a protracted one. All the adversities of this most onerous war in American history lay on the shoulders of the broad working masses. Blacks, workers, and farmers logically asked: why does the federal government not use its most powerful weapon—the emancipation of the slaves and their drafting into the army? “The Civil War seemed a struggle between two economic systems: the archaic ruralism of the South and the new capitalism of the North.”¹⁶ And certainly the fate of the black slaves depended to a large degree on the position of the northern bourgeoisie, who were the main force that prevented a radical solution of the Negro problem. They feared emancipating the slaves and drafting them into the army. The very thought that they would have to encroach on the sacred principle of private property had a paralyzing effect on the bourgeoisie.

Lincoln could not ignore what influential circles in the North thought. There was also strong opposition to freeing the slaves among the reactionary staff of generals and officers in the army. Reactionary circles skillfully used to their interests the rather common anti-Negro sentiments which prevailed within a certain part of the working populace in the northern states. Lincoln was particularly concerned about the reactionary part of the federal army’s generals. In a conversation with Charles Sumner, the leader of the radical Republicans, on July 4, 1862, Lincoln said: “I would do it [issue an edict of emancipation—*R.I.*] if I were not afraid that half the officers would fling down their arms and three more States would rise.”¹⁷

Hence, the forces opposing emancipation were not inconsiderable. Lincoln’s decision on the abolition of slavery, made under the pressure of circumstances impossible to ignore further, was all the more significant. The first and foremost of these circumstances was the energetic struggle of the slaves themselves for their freedom and the ever growing demands by radical circles in the US to free the slaves and move on to revolutionary methods of fighting the war, as dictated by military necessity.

The publication of the Emancipation Proclamation was preceded by a whole series of other measures whose enactment met with fierce opposition from both left and right.

Congress, in particular, was hostile to Lincoln’s idea of freeing the slaves with financial compensation for the slave owners. The President presented this plan to Congress on March 6, 1862.

Baron Stekl, the Russian envoy to the United States, reported to St. Petersburg on July 10, 1862: “When the President sent his Confiscation Bill back to Congress for further debate with a few minor changes, the demarche, which was completely legitimate, gave rise to a hectic scene in Congress and brought some very strong attacks on the President from some of the radicals.”¹⁸

The Homestead Law, passed in May 1862, was of great import. According to this law, any US citizen could receive 160 acres of land by paying a 10 dollar registration fee. The Homestead Law was the first serious strike against slavery, as it prevented the slave owners from seizing the “free” western lands. Without the constant expansion of plantations to new lands, slavery was doomed to gradually disappear. The Homestead Law gave rise to some rather crude abuses, in particular, to wild land speculation. On the whole, though, the law was the most radical solution to the agrarian problem of its time, as it laid the foundations for developing the nation’s agriculture by the so-called American way. The “American way”, as Lenin saw it, entailed the development of agriculture by independent, free farming, whereas the “Prussian way” was based on landowner farming. The “American way” was, for its time, the most democratic way of developing agriculture.

In 1862, the North passed several pieces of legislation aimed at restricting the interests of the stock market and big capital and also at combatting subversive activities by rebel agents. All these measures combined paved the way for transition to new and revolutionary methods of waging the war and for the emancipation of the slaves.

On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln published a Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation which said “that on the first day of January in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state, or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free”.¹⁹ The Proclamation added that the President would request Congress to pass a law on granting compensation to all slave owners not in rebellion and who were agreed to emancipate

their slaves. The Proclamation also provided for the voluntary resettlement of Blacks outside the United States.

Lincoln's Proclamation had many weak points. It was an act necessitated by the war. It provided for compensation to loyal slave owners who freed their slaves and for deporting Blacks from the US. In spite of all these defects, it was a progressive document of exceptional importance. The Proclamation's publication was the culmination of an entire era in American history. When regarded from a purely military point of view, the Proclamation becomes no less significant. It officially proclaimed a change in the war's goals, asserting that from then on the war was being waged not only to reunite the Union, but to abolish slavery, as well. Marx gave Lincoln's Proclamation a very lofty evaluation. He saw it as "the most important document in American history since the establishment of the Union, tantamount to the tearing up of the old American Constitution... Lincoln's place in the history of the United States and of mankind will, nevertheless, be next to that of Washington."²⁰

The Proclamation's publication radically changed the country's entire political situation. It led to a new alignment of class forces and opened altogether favorable prospects for the North in its struggle against the rebel southernners. Slavery's days were numbered. The *Sanktpeterburgskiy vedomosti* was entirely correct when it wrote on October 11, 1862: "There are no disagreements as far as the Proclamation's consequences are concerned. It is considered a death blow to slavery."

The emancipation of the slaves and their conscription in the federal army were dictated by a military necessity which became obvious after the very first defeats of the North back at the beginning of the war. It was only at a critical period of the war, in 1862, however, that Lincoln posed the question of turning this necessity into reality. The decisive reason for which the federal government was forced to liberate the slaves was the ever growing pressure of the masses. As the Soviet historian A. V. Yefimov has stressed: "In the resolution of this problem [the elimination of slavery—R.I.] which has been of historical significance for all of mankind, the enthusiasm of the people and pressure of public opinion on the ruling circles at a critical period of the Civil War were the main things."²¹

Lincoln's Proclamation was published after a year and

a half of war. In that time US federal armed forces had lost a number of serious battles and the war had become a grave burden to the working masses and greatly influenced public opinion. It was becoming more and more obvious that winning the war without the emancipation of the slaves and conscription of Blacks in the federal army was impossible. Most of the soldiers and officers in the army were quite aware of this, which was particularly important. The vast majority of the federal army greeted Lincoln's decision enthusiastically as a guarantee of a swift and complete victory over the rebel slave owners. The army's reactionary generals were the only exception—they were much pained by the news.

That Lincoln's decision was a correct and timely one was likewise confirmed by the sharply negative reaction to it on the part of the rebel slave owners. The Confederacy's leaders declared the emancipation of the slaves to be, allegedly, a violation of all the laws of civilized warfare. Appealing to the property instincts of the northern bourgeoisie, the Confederate press clamored that Lincoln wished to deprive the South of its right to own slaves, who were valued at four billion dollars, and was inspiring them "to rise in insurrection, with the assurance of aid from the whole military and naval power of the United States".²² Rebel agents asserted that with his publication of the Preliminary Proclamation, Lincoln was "taking a step toward a 'Robespierrian tyranny'".²³

The time between the publication of the Preliminary Proclamation and the emancipation of the slaves was a period of fierce struggle in the North over how the Revolution should develop further. The rebel slave owners and their agents in the North used every means they could to head off the emancipation of the slaves. A powerful coalition of progressive forces in the northern states was completely behind Lincoln's Proclamation and strove to create all the conditions necessary for its successful realization.

All during the war the slavery problem was a particularly acute one. The publication of Lincoln's Preliminary Proclamation made it the focus of attention in national politics. Numerous meetings and demonstrations were organized in the northern states. The slavery problem occupied a leading spot in commentaries by the press. Its particular gravity was reflected in the President's message to Congress of December 1, 1862. It was the first time Lincoln devoted so much attention to slavery. He emphasized that slavery

was the only reason for the South's rebellion. "Without slavery the rebellion could never have existed; without slavery it could not continue."²⁴ The President was most categorical in his rejection of assertions that the emancipation of the slaves would hit at the material interests of the broad working masses because of new competition by cheap Negro labor. Lincoln pointed to the direct dependence between the emancipation of the black slaves and the liberty of white citizens: "In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free."²⁵ Lincoln linked as closely as possible the war effort and the nation's well-being with the emancipation of the slaves. "The proposed emancipation," the President wrote, "would shorten the war, perpetuate peace, insure this increase of population, and proportionately the wealth of the country."²⁶

In addressing the slave owners, the President brought forth incontrovertible arguments on the necessity of their voluntary agreement to liberate the slaves. But his eloquence fell on deaf ears. The slave owners did not want to and could not destroy the economic and political foundation on which their idle well-being was propped up. Acceptance of Lincoln's proposal was tantamount to suicide for them or to agreeing to their voluntary elimination as a class. There was no precedent for it in history. The slave owners firmly rejected Lincoln's last attempt to persuade them to voluntarily free the slaves.

On the first day of 1863, President Lincoln made the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation official by putting his signature to it. Before doing so, he stated that never had he undertaken anything whose justice and necessity were so obvious as was this. "I have been shaking hands since nine o'clock this morning," said the President, "and my right arm is almost paralyzed... If my hand trembles when I sign the Proclamation, all who examine the document hereafter will say, 'He hesitated.'"²⁷ The President took up the pen and wrote slowly and firmly: "Abraham Lincoln." The Emancipation Proclamation was now official. It declared all slaves in the rebel states free and permitted the conscription into the army of former slaves who were fit for military service.

The Emancipation Proclamation reflected the waverings and doubts that Lincoln and certain circles of the bourgeois North felt on the Negro question. The emancipation did not extend to the million or so slaves in the border states which

remained loyal to the Union. The Proclamation did not provide for granting the former slaves either land or civil and political rights. Its sole motivation was military. Frederick Douglass was completely justified to say: "History does not furnish an example of Emancipation under conditions less friendly to the emancipated class than this American example."²⁸

In spite of all these drawbacks, the Proclamation had enormous progressive importance. Lincoln's greatest merit was that he listened to the demand of the working people, overcame fierce opposition by those bourgeois in the North who favored slavery, rejected the original idea of gradually freeing the slaves with compensation paid to their masters, and went the way of the revolutionary abolition of slavery by confiscation. Lincoln, a remarkably modest person, did not care to promote himself much, and one may fully agree with his opinion upon signing the Proclamation: "If my name ever gets into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it."²⁹

The working people of the North enthusiastically greeted Lincoln's Proclamation. The fears of those who thought the workers would be opposed to slavery's abolition, since the former slaves would now become competitors on the labor market, proved unjustified. In the time since the war began, the correctness of the Marxist thesis that the self-awareness of the masses develops with amazing quickness during revolutionary surges was once again confirmed. One of the New York workers' papers wrote, for instance, that the liberation of the slaves was fully in keeping with the interests of the working class and that the slavery of the black man leads to the slavery of the white man.

And, of course, black Americans were especially enthusiastic about Lincoln's Proclamation. They held grandiose demonstrations in the northern states to welcome the end of slavery. Frederick Douglass said: "We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree."³⁰ Douglass called the Proclamation the greatest event in American history and the most important event of the century. While welcoming the Proclamation's publication and giving Lincoln his due, Douglass stressed at the same time that the emancipation was won by the people. "We are not to be saved by Abraham Lincoln, but by that power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself."³¹

The federal army's reaction to the freeing of the slaves

attests to the fact that Lincoln chose a good time to publish his Proclamation. The great majority of servicemen welcomed the liberation of the slaves. The rebel slave owners fully realized the catastrophic consequences for them of the emancipation of the slaves. They reacted swiftly and viciously. The Confederacy convened an emergency Congress, which stated that the federal government was violating the laws of the southern states by instigating the black slaves to rebellion. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, suggested that Lincoln's Proclamation be responded to by sentencing officers of the North captured as prisoners of war to death. The Congress passed a resolution on repressions toward Black prisoners of war. The purpose of this resolution was obvious: to terrorize the Blacks and impede the formation of Negro regiments. The morbid reaction by all adherents of slavery to the Emancipation Proclamation was evidence that slavery had been stricken by a powerful and well-calculated blow.

Blacks reacted with great elan to the right granted them to use weapons to fight against the slave owners. Even in the war's first stage they gave the North all manner of assistance in its struggle with the slave owners. Their part in the struggle had now been given a new impetus. Their emancipation meant the transition to a new and revolutionary stage in the war which was to open up highly favorable prospects for black Americans. They now had the right to use weapons to fight for slavery's elimination. Frederick Douglass made a fiery appeal to Afro-Americans: "The day dawns; the morning star is bright upon the horizon! The iron gate of our prison stands half open. One gallant rush from the North will fling it wide open, while four millions of our brothers and sisters shall march out into liberty."³² Douglass was well aware of the great significance of Blacks' participating directly in the struggle for slavery's abolition. In addressing them, he laid emphasis on the fact that "liberty won by white men would lose half its luster. Who would be free themselves must strike the blow. Better to die free than to live slaves."³³

Rebel agents in the North did all they could to try to impede the formation of Negro regiments. Rumors were spread that Blacks who joined the federal army would again fall into slavery, would be sold off in Cuba, and that black soldiers would be thrown into the most dangerous situations in the fighting and left to be slaughtered. But Blacks would

not give in to these provocative statements. They enthusiastically joined the army. Lincoln was given a document on March 10, 1864 which was signed by more than a thousand black residents of Louisiana. The document said that when danger threatened New Orleans, "Governor Shepley called for troops for the defence of the city, and they [Blacks—*R.I.*] were foremost in responding to the call, having raised the 1st regiment in the short space of forty-eight hours."³⁴

In South Carolina, a group of Afro-Americans wanting to join the US Army was asked the question: "If you are promised your freedom, will you not be willing to fight for it?" The answer was clear and concise: "To be sure we should." They insisted that freedom should be extended to their families, as well. The author of this information, H.D. Smith, who was responsible for recruiting Blacks into the US Army in South Carolina, reported: "I never saw such enthusiasm as was in my camp... They realize that they have the rights of men."³⁵

Robert Smalls told of the ardent desire of Negroes to fight for their freedom. This man's name became widely known throughout the land shortly after the start of the war. Smalls was a Negro boat pilot who seized the rebel ship *Planter* in the Charleston harbor and navigated the ship into the open sea. In so doing, he demonstrated exceptional ingenuity and courage, taking the ship right from under the barrels of artillery guns in Charleston forts and guiding it safely to forces of the federal navy. Smalls said that Blacks were prepared to fight in the federal armed forces but wanted a guarantee of their freedom. "If they have a chance there would be no difficulty in raising a military force. If our headquarters were in Charleston we would raise ten or fifteen regiments."³⁶

The tremendous enthusiasm which the Blacks showed in joining the army was all the more striking since they were subject to the most severe discrimination there. All the chief officers' commands in black regiments were held by Whites. Blacks were discriminated against in the awarding of officers' and non-commissioned ranks. The families of black military personnel did not enjoy the privileges that the families of their white comrades-in-arms did. Blacks made ten dollars a month, or even six in some regiments, while Whites made thirteen. Racist soldiers in the North even went so far as committing acts of treachery against soldiers in Negro regiments. There are instances of federal

troops firing from the rear of black soldiers fighting the slave owners. Such facts as these elicited sharp protests in the army and in political circles in the North.

Black soldiers did not limit themselves to serving protest petitions against discrimination. They took to arms, as well, and this generally ended tragically. In March of 1864, Velker, a sergeant in the 3rd South Carolina colored regiment, ordered his soldiers to place their rifles in a pyramid in front of the company commander's tent and state that they refused to serve in the army until such time as their demand for equal pay for black soldiers be satisfied. A court martial sentenced the sergeant to a firing squad. As a "lesson", evidently, his comrades in the company were ordered to carry out the sentence. Eleven soldiers fired a volley, after which the sergeant, it was noted, had sustained but one bullet wound. The execution was then ordered to be carried out by another group of Negro soldiers, who did in fact finish the assignment.

In spite of the discrimination against them, black soldiers fought bravely in the ranks of the federal army. The first battle in which black regiments participated took place on May 27, 1863 at Port Hudson, Louisiana. The federal troops storming Port Hudson were stopped by a hail of artillery fire. Three white regiments, having sustained huge losses, retreated from the battlefield. Two Negro regiments joined the fray in the front ranks of the attackers. Powerful artillery fire and rifle volleys cut through the ranks of the attacking black soldiers, but they nevertheless fearlessly kept up the siege of Port Hudson, hurling themselves six times at the enemy in desperate attacks. They fought from morning until 3:30 p.m. the most awful slaughter a man could go through. Wounded black soldiers refused to leave the battlefield. When the order to retreat was given, they retreated as in a parade. The banner under which the black soldiers fought was carried with honor through this bloody battle. Six black banner-bearers died defending the fighting colors. *The New York Times* wrote about the battle of Port Hudson: "Their colors are torn to pieces by shot, and literally bespattered by blood and brains. The color-sergeant of the 1st Louisiana, on being mortally wounded, hugged the colors to his breast, when a struggle ensued between the two color-corporals on each side of him, as to who should have the honor of bearing the sacred standard."³⁷

The Russian journal *Russkoye slovo* (The Russian Word)

wrote about the black soldiers: "Now no one can really doubt the courage of Negroes on the battlefield. Their former masters, with whom they are exchanging bayonet blows, do not doubt it either... Here it is, the army of Blacks whom they so feared to see attacking them with axes and daggers in their hands on the plantations; here is the maddened crowd, but now that it has military organization, it is calm in gaining victories and besieging cities."³⁸ Colonel James Brisbin, himself involved in the brave attack by the black cavalry which left 114 of the 200 attackers dead and wounded, stated: "Of this fight I can only say that men could not have behaved more bravely."³⁹

On June 6, 1863, black soldiers under the command of Civil War hero General Ulysses Grant distinguished themselves in the battle of Milliken's Bend. Only black soldiers supported by a small detachment of white cavalry took part in this battle. The rebels took forty black soldiers prisoner during the fighting, all of whom were brutally murdered. The black soldiers cruelly avenged the deaths of their comrades. A man who witnessed the battle described it like this: "It was a genuine bayonet charge, a hand-to-hand fight, that has never occurred to any extent during this prolonged conflict. Upon both sides men were killed with the butts of muskets. White and black men were lying side by side, pierced by bayonets, and in some instances transfixed to the earth. In one instance, two men, one white and the other black, were found dead, side by side, each having the other's bayonet through his body."⁴⁰

Black soldiers showed great military expertise and mass heroism at the storming of Fort Wagner, one of the decisive battles of the Civil War. The Confederates opened a hurricane of artillery fire which had no equal during the entire war. The Northerners were headed by 650 soldiers of the heroic 54th Massachusetts black regiment, who moved through a solid wall of artillery fire. Their losses were enormous. The regimental commander and nearly all the officers were killed. In all, 280 of the regiment's 650 men were lost, but, nevertheless, the Blacks were the first to break through to the parapet and make a desperate bayonet charge. During the assault 33 standard-bearers were killed, but all the same the black soldiers managed to carry their banner off the field of battle.

Black regiments were accumulating fighting experience and had reached battle maturity. They soon became the most

reliable and battle-proficient parts of the federal army. It is characteristic that Grant, Sherman, and Butler, the most famous military leaders of the Civil War, won the majority of their most important battles with troops containing many black soldiers. Sherman's army had especially many black regiments. Engels in November 1864 wrote to Weydemeyer, a friend of Marx's and an active participant in the Civil War: "It seems to me certain that the army now commanded by Sherman is the best of your armies."⁴¹

Negro regiments earned themselves eternal glory in numerous great battles of the Civil War. The last stronghold of the rebels, the Confederate capital of Richmond, fell in April 1865. Negro regiments broke into the city first, singing about John Brown. The 29th Connecticut Negro regiment distinguished itself in the battles for Richmond. Its soldiers seized 500 cannon, 6,000 rifles, and a large number of prisoners from February through April 1865. The 8th, 41st, 45th, 54th, and 127th Negro regiments also distinguished themselves in battles for the Confederate capital.

Negro regiments fought under very difficult conditions. The rebels did not recognize black soldiers as legitimate participants in the war. They were guided by the Proclamation of Confederacy President Davis', which said that captured black soldiers and their officers should be executed. This resulted in many savage reprisals by slave owners against captured soldiers and officers of Negro regiments. In April 1864, for example, the rebels captured Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River 50 miles from the city of Memphis. Some 262 of the fort's garrison of 557 were black. The slave owners were savage in their treatment of the Blacks taken prisoner, subjecting them to elaborate tortures, burning several of them alive, and bayonetting the wounded to the earth. Those left alive were forced to their knees and shot. The Confederate General and former slave-trader Nathan Forrest directed the Fort Pillow massacre. When the Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1865, it was he who headed the terror organization of white racists.

Colonel D. Brisbin, who took part in the above-mentioned attack of the black cavalry, pointed out that when the Northerners were forced to retreat from their positions, they took with them everybody they could, even seriously wounded black soldiers. They preferred to go through torment rather than surrender to the enemy, as they knew that death by torture awaited them if captured, Brisbin

reported: "I saw one man riding with his arm off, another shot through the lungs and another shot through both hips."⁴² The refined cruelty of the rebels was calculated to terrorize the Blacks and break down their will to fight. It had just the opposite result, however. Knowing what awaited them should they be captured, black soldiers would very rarely surrender, preferring to die on the battlefield. It should also be mentioned that while instances of desertion were fairly frequent among Whites in the US Army, black soldiers very rarely deserted.

The mass heroism of Afro-Americans in the armed struggle against the slave owners may be easily explained. Frederick Douglass was entirely correct when he wrote: "Only a moderate share of sagacity was needed to see that the arm of the slave was the best defense against the arm of the slaveholder."⁴³ For the first time in all history Blacks officially had the right to use weapons to fight for their freedom. This was the chief reason for their mass heroism and readiness to sacrifice themselves.

Blacks actively fought in the navy against the rebel slave owners. Many thousands of Blacks also fought in guerilla detachments against the Confederates. The guerilla movement in the slave owners' rear became especially strong in the second stage of the war. Many Blacks gave considerable help to the federal forces as reconnaissance aides, guides, and pilots.⁴⁴ Special sabotage units in which many Blacks fought were infiltrated onto Confederate territory from the North. Being a part of such units was extremely risky and demanding, especially for Blacks who, if caught, would be tortured and killed.

A Negro unit commanded by Colonel Richard Montgomery, who took a prominent part in the Civil War in Kansas, gained lasting glory during raids in the rebel rear. During just one three-day raid in May 1863, this unit burned a city which was a key stronghold for the enemy, wiped out several units of slave owners, destroyed two million dollars worth of rebel property, and got 800 slaves out to the North's side of the frontline.⁴⁵ The heroic daughter of the Negro people, Harriet Tubman, or "General Tubman", as she was known in the North, fought in Montgomery's unit. Tubman had fled captivity in 1848 and become a conductor on the "Underground Railroad", quite a risky venture. Legends have formed around this woman. Before the war she made 19 raids on the South, led 300 slaves to the North, and inspired thou-

sands of others to run away. The slaves called her "Moses". The slave owners offered a reward of 40,000 dollars to anyone who would capture dead or alive this "greatest heroine of the century", as the Abolitionists called her. During the Civil War, Tubman would often cross the frontline at the head of a black unit. She had many heroic deeds to her credit and became a living legend of the Civil War. After the war, she remained an active participant in the Negro movement. This remarkable woman died in poverty in 1913 at the age of nearly 100.

Blacks were highly esteemed by their white comrades-in-arms in the military defeat of the slave owners. In August of 1864, Lincoln stated: "There have been men who have proposed to me to return to slavery the black warriors of Port Hudson and Olustee to their masters to conciliate the South. I should be damned in time and in eternity for so doing... But no human power can subdue this rebellion without using the Emancipation lever."⁴⁶

Having begun drafting Blacks into the army, it was no longer possible to prohibit them from taking up arms against the slave owners. This could not be done either from the military or from the political point of view. "Abandon all the posts now garrisoned by black men," said the President, "take two hundred thousand men from our side and put them in the battlefield or cornfield against us, and we would be compelled to abandon the war in three weeks."⁴⁷

General Grant welcomed Lincoln's decision to free the black slaves and did all he could to help put the Emancipation Proclamation into action. In March 1864, Grant was named Commander-in-Chief of the US forces and transferred from the Western front to Virginia, where the final decisive battles of the Civil War remained to be fought.⁴⁸ He took with him not a single white regiment, but did have 20,000 Blacks who had fought with him in the West transferred to Virginia.

One may cite numerous appraisals of the heroic participation of Blacks in military actions against the rebels. Brigadier General Rufus Saxton of the US Army stated, for instance: "The Negroes fought with a coolness and bravery that would have done credit to veteran soldiers. There was no excitement, no flinching, no attempt at cruelty when successful. They seemed like men who were fighting to vindicate their manhood and they did it well."⁴⁹ General Banks, the former Massachusetts governor, and General Samuel

Ullmann declared that the Blacks had "behaved magnificently, and fought splendidly".⁵⁰

Official statistics, which are obviously on the low side, indicate that 186,000 Blacks had served in the federal army by the war's end, accounting for more than 12 percent of the North's entire armed forces. Another 250,000 Blacks served in some military capacity or another on the home front.⁵¹ Blacks took part in 449 battles during the Civil War. Some 38,000 Negro soldiers and officers were killed in action.⁵² It is virtually impossible to determine the number of those who were killed fighting the rebels as guerrillas within the Confederacy itself.

In assessing the role of Blacks in the military defeat of the Confederacy, one must take into account that, along with workers and farmers, they made up the core of the anti-slavery coalition of the North which waged a difficult struggle with rebel agents in the northern states. Blacks were the chief social base for the union movement in the southern states which opposed the rebel slave owners. They inflicted great blows on the slave owners on their home soil. In addition to the enumerated forms of armed struggle in the rebels' rear, Blacks sabotaged work on the plantations, burned property of the planters, and fled to the North en masse. Some 500,000 slaves risked their lives to flee to the North during the war.⁵³

In the second stage of the war, but before the publication of the Emancipation Proclamation, many thousands of slaves and free Blacks actively participated in the construction of defensive structures, and worked on farms, in industry, and in trade workshops. This was also a serious contribution by Afro-Americans to the military defeat of the rebel slave owners and to the elimination of slavery. "Through this direct participation [in the Civil War—*R.I.*], wrote Herbert Aptheker, "the Negro people contributed, directly and decisively, towards the maintenance of the American Republic and their own liberation from chattel slavery."⁵⁴

The Revolution Continues

The Civil War was a special form of bourgeois-democratic revolution in the course of which the major blow was directed at the abolition of slavery. This fundamental problem was resolved not in a constitutional, but in a revolutionary way:

slavery was eliminated in the course of a revolutionary war. The war brought into motion many millions of white and black working people and left a deep imprint on the course of the Revolution and its results. Lenin placed emphasis on "the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1863-65".⁵⁵

The working people played the decisive part in the slave owners' defeat, but most of the fruits of victory went to the bourgeoisie. All government power went over to it, and highly favorable economic and political conditions were created for capitalism's development in both industry and agriculture. The bourgeoisie resolved the main problems confronting it in the course of the Civil War, and it was dead set against any development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The particular consequence of this course was that the emancipation of the slaves was merely formal in nature. The liberated slaves had neither land nor civil or political rights. The planters managed to preserve a significant part of their latifundia. The slaves had won their personal freedom, but still remained in economic and political dependence on their former masters. The situation was developing in which a new form of slave dependence of Blacks on planters could, if not de jure, then de facto, be in the making.

Back during the war, Blacks and radical white Republicans demanded that former slaves be given land and civil and political rights equal to those of Whites. The hundreds of thousands of Afro-Americans and their white allies became more vociferous in these demands after the war. The land struggle was aimed at bringing about bourgeois-democratic transformations in the southern states. This movement, which was called Reconstruction, was aimed at resolving complex socio-economic and political problems which had not been resolved during the war.

Reconstruction—the development of favorable capitalist relations in the southern states—was in its political and socio-economic content a continuation of the Civil War and a second phase of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1861-1877. The slaves had been the main productive force in the southern states and it was obvious that the real Reconstruction of this enormous region could not be brought about without bringing broad masses of the Negro people into this process.

On April 14, 1865, when the entire country was festively

marking the end of the Civil War, John Wilkes Booth, an agent of the slave owners and their supporters in the North, seriously wounded President Lincoln in the Ford Theater in Washington. Lincoln died without regaining consciousness. The Vice-President, Andrew Johnson, "a dirty tool of the slaveholders",⁵⁶ in the words of Marx, became the new President. Johnson's pro-slavery sentiments became evident when, by February 1867, two billion dollars worth of property which had earlier been confiscated from the planters was returned to them. For Blacks, Johnson's policies were in fact a new form of slavery. During the Civil War, Johnson had vigorously opposed the rebels and saw the South's rebellion as a direct threat to the Union's existence. One of his first acts as President was to declare an amnesty for the rebels, which he did on May 29, 1865. He named former rebels provisional governors in the southern states.⁵⁷ These governors gave amnesty to virtually every one of the Confederate rebels. Over a period of several months he pardoned 14,000 active participants in the South's rebellion. He did all he could to save from retribution Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, who was responsible, as the Russian paper *Moskovskiye vedomosti* wrote, for the premeditated murder of 50,000 soldiers and officers of the US Army who had been taken prisoners of war.⁵⁸

Johnson published his own plan of the South's Reconstruction, which did not provide for Blacks' receiving either economic, civil, or political rights and which excluded them from helping in the Reconstruction process. In essence, in line with his program, the planters could get away with the mere formal recognition of slavery's abolition, after which the entire state power in the southern states would pass over into their hands. Johnson's Reconstruction program reflected the interests of the planters and reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie who feared that bringing about bourgeois-democratic reforms in the southern states would lead to a further entrenchment of the revolution and a strengthening in the movement of the masses. The program created all the conditions for activating the defeated, but not eliminated rebel slave owners. Carl Schurz, a general who had been active in the Civil War, pointed out that President Johnson's policies would provide incentive for counter-revolutionary forces in the South.⁵⁹

Johnson's Reconstruction program was a candid attempt to bring to naught by juridical means the revolutionary gains

of the Civil War. He did not, however, take proper account of the new alignment of class forces in the nation after the war's end. Blacks were the chief obstacle to realization of Johnson's plans, and so, in the very first months following the war's conclusion, a fierce terror was begun against the former slaves and their white allies. The violence which flared up against Blacks in the South had no precedent in US history to that point. To a large degree this resulted from the fact that slaves were no longer the chattels of the planters and consequently there were no longer any incentives to take decent care of them. The sharp increase in anti-Negro terror could also be attributed to the heightened pitch of the class struggle during Reconstruction, when the issue of eliminating the system of large-scale landowning was raised.

The freed slaves frequently went on working in the same slave conditions that had existed before the war. On January 1, 1866, General Strong reported to Congress that two-thirds of the former slaves in Texas had not received a single cent of pay since slavery was abolished.⁶⁰ A similar situation existed in other states, as well. The planters held former slaves on the plantations by force. They formed organizations which declared that slaves who left their former masters would be killed. Murder, torture, and the sale of former slaves into slavery in far-off regions of the South became common occurrences. Many Blacks were sold to Cuba.

A terror organization known as the Ku Klux Klan was created in Tennessee in 1865. Well-organized, top secret divisions of this organization terrorized former slaves and their allies from the white population. After the organization of the Ku Klux Klan, terror against Blacks took on especially great dimensions. Numerous reports began to be received from the southern states of mutilated bodies of Blacks with their ears or noses cut off or eyes poked out found in ditches, cesspools, and water holes. Hanging or burning alive were common methods used by the Ku Klux Klan in dealing with Blacks. They were especially cruel in their treatment of demobilized black soldiers from the federal army. The wide scale of violence can be seen from the fact that in Georgia 150 people were killed over a ten-month period in 1866. In Arkansas, 52 people fell victims of terror over 3-4 months in the same year.

The murderers were not punished in a single case. Freedom

from punishment encouraged the terrorists and soon they went on from acts of individual terror to organizing mass pogroms. One such pogrom took place in May 1866 in Memphis, Tennessee. The local authorities and police were responsible for organizing and carrying out the pogrom. The pogrom resulted in the deaths of 46 Blacks and two white Republicans; 75 people were injured and five black women raped. Most of the pogrom victims had fought on the side of the North in the Civil War. Widespread looting and arson accompanied the pogrom—90 homes, 12 schools, and four churches were burned down. It was only when federal troops intervened that the bloodbath was halted. There were pogroms in other cities of the South, too. Nathan Forrest, the leader of the Ku Klux Klan, openly admitted: "I intend to kill the Radicals."⁶¹ The Ku Klux Klan did, in fact, gear its repressions not only against Blacks, but against their white radical Republican allies, as well. It set off "a reign of bloody terror that was unworthy of a civilized community."⁶² So as to weaken its enemy, the Ku Klux Klan killed off Negro leaders.⁶³ Soldiers and officers of the old Confederacy were the most active participants in the pogroms. They were encouraged to a large degree by the indulgent attitude the commanders of the federal army showed to them when they surrendered. For example, when General Lee surrendered to Grant, Grant disbanded all the enemy's soldiers, sending them home and even allowing the cavalry to take horses with them.

The planters did not limit themselves to acts of terror. They passed laws aimed at regaining their positions in the South. So-called Black Codes were passed in the southern states in 1865-1866. These were legislative acts designed to regulate the status of Blacks. A special system of reservations was introduced for freed slaves so as to deprive them of their freedom of movement. They were prohibited from owning weapons or real estate, holding meetings, etc. A system of contracts was worked out for former slaves which introduced compulsory, in essence, slave labor. The Codes established a system of apprenticeship as a kind of compulsory labor and introduced very severe penalties for so-called vagrancy. The Black Codes deprived Afro-Americans of the right to work, to legal defense, and to self-defense. By introducing the Black Codes, the slave owners openly revised the outcome of the Civil War, attempting to negate the emancipation of the slaves. The US Army commander in

Virginia was absolutely correct when he declared that the Black Codes would place the liberated slaves in conditions even worse than those which the Civil War had done away with. The main point of the anti-Negro terror amounted to keeping the principal economic demand of Afro-Americans—the expropriation of the lands of the former slave owners and their redistribution among the freed slaves—from being carried out. Agricultural labor was the only means that the great majority of Blacks had to support themselves, and so they were determined to get their way on the agrarian issue. In December of 1865, Afro-Americans declared at a meeting in Alabama that unless they received some land, there would inevitably be bloodshed. Numerous petitions from Blacks demanding the partitioning of lands of the former slave owners were sent to Congress. The former slaves had every reason to think that unless they got some land, their freedom was just a fiction. One Negro leader, Francis Cardozo, a member of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina, said: "We will never have true freedom until we abolish the system of agriculture which existed in the Southern States... What is the main cause of the prosperity of the North? It is because every man has his own farm and is free and independent."⁶⁴

Even at the outset of Reconstruction there were instances of Blacks taking lands from planters by force. As an example, in the spring of 1867 not far from Richmond, Virginia, 500 armed Afro-Americans refused to pay rent to the planter they were working for, saying the land they were tilling ought to belong to them. The uprising was put down by force.⁶⁵ In the fall of 1866, several Blacks were killed near Memphis, Tennessee, while attempting to seize lands which belonged to planters.⁶⁶ Federal troops were employed to head off all attempts by emancipated slaves to resolve the agrarian problem by simply taking over the planters' lands.

A bright page in the history of the struggle by Blacks for land in the Reconstruction period were the events which took place along the coast of South Carolina, Florida, and the islands lying offshore there. To save themselves from the advancing federal army during the Civil War, the slave owners fled this area and left their lands. General Sherman, in command of the troops that were advancing, issued an order in January 1865 giving Blacks the right to occupy and work these lands for as long as the war lasted. The text of the order was put such that it was understood that when

the war was over Congress would make the land the property of the Blacks.⁶⁷ The former slaves enthusiastically began tilling the land, creating a local government and successfully managing their own farms. They made great progress in organizing a new way of life for themselves.

The Russian press published numerous stories on how the freed slaves showed a keen desire to work their own land. Russian papers did not always have their own correspondents in the United States, but extracts published from the foreign press enable us to judge the position of Russian papers and journals. The *Moskovskiye vedomosti* journal, for instance, published an excerpt from the German *Allgemeine Zeitung* on the work of the former slaves: "Wherever the Negroes were treated philanthropically, they turned out to be in no time highly independent, diligent, and upstanding people... The experiment done with Negroes in the local department [the offshore islands—*R.I.*] has been a complete success."⁶⁸ Immediately after the war, the planters, counting on federal troops to help them, made an attempt to get back these lands. The Blacks put up armed resistance. To avoid bloodshed, the army withdrew from the area. Forceful and well-organized action by the former slaves in defense of their right to own the land gave positive results. Even after the end of the Second World War more than half the Blacks in this area owned their own property and were not lessees, quite a rare occurrence in the South.

Negro regiments in the US Army offered considerable help to Afro-Americans in their struggle for land. In October 1865, about 85,000 black soldiers, most of whom were located in the southern states, were serving in the federal armed forces. Black soldiers quartered in Texas called for former slaves to adamantly demand the confiscation and partitioning of plantations. The commander of a Negro regiment at Jackson, Mississippi, declared that Blacks ought to uphold their right to land "to the click of the pistol, and at the point of the bayonet".⁶⁹ Former slave owners, for their part, did not stop at open repressions and terrorist acts against black soldiers. There were even instances of repressive acts against the commanders of Negro troops. One county sheriff in Mississippi, for example, arrested the colonel of a colored infantry detachment and was "sustained by the President" for doing so.⁷⁰

Since Negro regiments were giving considerable aid to former slaves in the struggle for their rights, planters were

adamant in demanding that Negro troops be withdrawn from southern states. These demands were supported by active and influential individuals in the North, in particular, in the person of General Grant, hero of the Civil War. In the winter of 1865, he went on an inspection tour of the South and recommended to the President that Negro troops be withdrawn from the southern states. Grant's arguments are worth looking at. The presence of black troops demoralized the workers, former slaves, Grant wrote, because the troops gave them both advice and aid. Grant was perturbed that the freed slaves seemed possessed by the idea that the property of their former masters should by right belong to them or, at any rate, not be guarded by black soldiers. Grant said that while black soldiers should be withdrawn, there was a definite need to keep white soldiers in the South. His conclusion was that both Whites and Blacks were in equal need of the federal government's protection.⁷¹

General Alfred Terry, who was in charge of the federal troops in Florida, was a bit more candid in giving the reason for having federal troops in the South. "I should say there would be danger that the Blacks would commit those acts which an oppressed people, sooner or later, commit against their oppressors."⁷²

In the spring of 1866, on the order of President Johnson, a part of the federal troops, black regiments heading the list, was withdrawn from the South.

The Negro movement in the Reconstruction period relied on a fair number of different political and military organizations. Negro Conventions played an especially important part in the struggle for the rights of Blacks. The first Conventions were called in the summer of 1865 in Tennessee and North Carolina. They passed bourgeois-democratic constitutions in which Blacks for the first time recorded the demands which the revolutionary movement was then calling for. Black voters were instrumental in getting the new constitutions passed.⁷³ Despite what bourgeois historians might say, even at this early stage of Reconstruction Blacks demonstrated a high level of political awareness. This is shown particularly by the fact that the South Carolina Convention passed a resolution which said that Blacks were fighting for a cause which affected not only four million colored Americans, but millions of people in other countries, as well.

Union Leagues played an especially great role in the

struggle by Blacks for their economic and political rights. Union Leagues, which had emerged back during the war, united black and white opponents of the Confederacy. The great majority of their members were black. All told, there were an estimated 500,000 members in the Leagues in the southern states.⁷⁴ Under the Leagues, militarized Negro organizations were formed which protected the population from armed attacks by racists. The Leagues turned into genuine "storm centers" of the Revolution during Reconstruction. The American Marxist historian James Allen justifiably compares them to the Jacobin clubs during the French Revolution of 1789-1794.

In spite of all the efforts by racists during the years of the reactionary Johnson administration to disarm Blacks, this end was not accomplished. Many Blacks had returned from the war with their weapons and they now formed the backbone of the black militia, rifle clubs, and other armed Negro organizations. Later, Reconstruction in the South was taken over by the radical Republicans who created Reconstruction governments in the former rebel states. Power was delegated to new authorities in the South who were to carry out programs of bourgeois-democratic reform. After the formation of the Reconstruction governments, the Negro militia was recognized as the official militia in a number of states.

President Johnson's policies sought to return the planters to power in the South. Having secured their positions in the southern states, the former slave owners demanded representation in the federal government. This meant revising the results of the Civil War and was a direct threat to the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois radicals began demanding a revision of Johnson's policies in the South and, after a determined struggle, they were able to take control over the further course of Reconstruction. In December 1865, Congress officially sanctioned the emancipation of the slaves by approving the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. The 14th Amendment, giving Blacks the right to vote, was approved in June 1866. A number of other legislative acts were passed which altogether signified the end of the President's Reconstruction and the transition to a new and revolutionary stage—the radical Reconstruction of the South. All power in the southern states was assumed by the federal army. Over a million Blacks were given the right to vote.

In the summer of 1867, elections were held to the Constitutional Conventions. In spite of Ku Klux Klan terror, Blacks took an active part in the election struggle for the first time in US history.⁷⁵ In the ten southern states, 700,000 Blacks surmounted various obstacles and registered as voters. Some 200,000 Southerners who had been involved in the rebellion lost their right to vote. All this created the necessary conditions for the radical Republicans to win the elections and for the Constitutional Conventions to be held. Bourgeois-democratic constitutions were ratified at these conventions which proclaimed the reconstruction of the entire socio-economic and political system of the South on bourgeois principles. Local governments, with the widespread activity of Blacks (for the first time in US history), were instrumental in this reconstruction. During Reconstruction for the first time 14 Afro-Americans were elected to the House of Representatives and two to the Senate.

Reconstruction was a highly important stage in the history of the Negro people in the United States. It was at this time that Afro-Americans struck a devastating blow at racist twaddle about the inferiority of the black people and the inability of former slaves to participate in rebuilding society. Blacks made especially great progress in public education. The number of black school pupils increased by a factor of over 500 during Reconstruction as compared with 1860, and by the end of the Reconstruction period they numbered over 500,000. It must be emphasized that in many states the Reconstruction governments passed laws on the integrated education of black and white children. At the same time, racists did all they could to prevent integrated education and, in isolated instances, succeeded. But on the whole, the laws were carried out as intended and black and white children studied in the same schools without any hindrances. The experience of integrated education in the Reconstruction period is a persuasive historical argument confuting the crazy ideas of contemporary American racists that children of different races and skin color cannot be educated together. The efforts of Blacks themselves were the most important factor assuring the success of former slaves in public education. "Every cent spent on them was taken from Negro rents and wages,"⁷⁶ pointed out W.E.B. DuBois. The progress of Blacks in public education was all the more impressive as it was attained during

a period of most severe terror which racists used against the teachers and pupils.

Black Americans were most active in politics in the southern states, making use, in particular, of the active and passive suffrage which they gained during Reconstruction. Black Americans stubbornly fought for their civil and political rights and got energetically involved in public life and economics.

The period of Reconstruction was a renaissance of the black people in America. The progress they made in this period in all areas of life testified to enormous unspent spiritual, intellectual, and physical strength which had been pent up by centuries of slavery. They could not, however, resolve a very important question—the agrarian one—since any just solution to it was actively opposed by the bloc of plantation owners and bourgeoisie. It must be taken into account that many representatives of the bourgeoisie became powerful landowners in the southern states during Reconstruction and also did all they could to hinder the redistribution of land property in the South, as this was in conflict with their economic interests. Speaking on the agrarian issue in the US, Lenin pointed out that its essence lies in the disintegration of latifundia. He stressed that after the conclusion of the Civil War "a decisive blow was dealt at the latifundia of the slave-owners".⁷⁷ The appraisals of Lenin's allow us to conclude that the second American revolution created the economic and political prerequisites for the development of capitalism in the South's agriculture along the "American way" of farming.

A whole series of factors, however, shows that capitalism's development in southern agriculture along the "American way" met with stubborn resistance by proponents of the "Prussian way" of capitalism's agricultural development. The evolution of the southern states after the second American revolution was marked by two tendencies in capitalist development, with one winning out in some regions, and the other in other regions. All this created a most complicated conglomerate of economic and political problems in the South. The "American way", progressive for a capitalist state, coexisted with diehard remnants of slavery. Lenin often stressed this aspect of the problem. He wrote that "the economic survivals of slavery are not in any way distinguishable from those of feudalism, and in the former slave-owning South of the U.S.A. these survivals are still

very powerful".⁷⁸ He also added: "For the 'emancipated' Negroes the American South is a kind of prison."⁷⁹

Neither the Reconstruction governments nor the Republican Party would support Negro demands for land. "Forty acres and a mule" became the chief slogan of former slaves where satisfaction of their socio-economic needs was concerned. An American historian wrote: "Republican regimes did little to fulfill the shattered dream of forty acres and a mule... The Reconstruction governments betrayed black dreams."⁸⁰

The overwhelming majority of Blacks were employed in agricultural production. This was virtually the only way they could make a living, and the refusal to give them some land had all the more negative consequences since working as land tenants was also fraught with serious obstacles for former slaves. After the harvest was taken in, plantation owners would refuse to pay Blacks for their labor and chased them off the plantations by force, and "their lives [were] threatened should they dare to return".⁸¹ Despite severe want, Blacks were extremely reluctant to sign contracts with plantation owners because "they had no confidence whatever in the word of their old masters".⁸²

The unsuccessful attempts by Blacks to solve the agrarian question during Reconstruction to a significant degree assured that the plantation owners would regain power in the South. They have left their mark on the socio-economic and political life of this sanctuary of racism right up to our times. The poorest strata of Blacks and Whites in the South took the most radical position on the agrarian issue. It was they along with a few leaders of the radical Republicans who demanded the confiscation of land and its free distribution among the poor in the South. It is noteworthy that even Frederick Douglass took a very moderate position on the agrarian question. He would not go farther than demanding that Blacks be sold land under more or less acceptable conditions. Douglass' position was all the more noteworthy in that, as a former slave, he was well aware of the great significance the solution of this problem had for Blacks.

The workers and farmers of the North and West did not give Blacks direct aid during Reconstruction. One must take note, though, that a powerful movement of workers and farmers was under way at this time in the northern and western states. This movement was important in sup-

porting the southern Blacks in their revolutionary struggle against the reactionary plantation owners. Workers demonstrated great awareness during Reconstruction. This is evidenced by the Address of the National Labor Congress to the Workingmen of the United States. The Address said that "capitalists, North and South, would foment discord between the Whites and Blacks, and hurl the one against the other, as interest and occasion might require, to maintain their ascendancy and continue the reign of oppression".⁸³

The question of admitting Blacks to the labor unions was vigorously discussed in the US workers' press in the 1860s. Progressive representatives of the working class were vehemently opposed to any sort of discrimination in deciding the matter. In 1867, the *Boston Daily Evening Voice* wrote apropos: "This question should not have come up at all, any more than the question of red-headed labor, or blue-eyed labor."⁸⁴ But most of the workers and farmers in the West were busy resolving their own important economic problems and did not offer any effective aid to the Negro population of the South. This is one of the most important reasons that Blacks lost the struggle for their rights.

After ratification of the new Constitutions, the former rebel states were re-admitted to the Union as full-fledged members. The year 1870 marked the beginning of a period of reaction in the South. Playing chiefly on racial prejudices, the plantation owners were able to split the united front of Republicans in the southern states. This was the beginning of the end of radical Reconstruction. The fall of the Reconstruction governments became only a question of time.

Black and white Republicans gave fierce armed resistance to the onset of reaction. The southern states, in essence, were gripped by the passion of civil war. In a number of states, detachments of plantation owners numbering several thousand persons armed with artillery as well as firearms attacked local governments. The planters were helped by the passivity of federal troops, who betrayed their black and white allies by not intervening. The planters took one state after another. The Reconstruction governments depended first of all on the support of broad masses of Blacks, and so the mass terror by the former slave owners against them undermined the very basis of the Republican governments in the South. Eric Foner justly notes that "another signal failing of the Reconstruction governments, their

inability to protect Blacks against violence, often had disastrous economic consequences".⁸⁵

The Russian diplomatic mission in Washington reported numerous instances of the terror by the former slave owners in the South. On March 31, 1871, a report to Chancellor Gorchakov said that "as soon as the Ku Klux Klan acquired strength, acts of terror began to be repeated with horrifying rapidity". The following facts came out in the report: "Just recently yet another senator from South Carolina was murdered by a band of 50 people disguised in different clothes. In the state of Tennessee, a member of the federal Congress who had refused for eight days to leave the state, was hanged. Women, too, are being subject to violence..."⁸⁶ The Ku Klux Klan lost no time in getting rid of the Negro leaders,⁸⁷ so as to leave the radical Reconstruction movement without effective leadership. The well-known Negro leader John Lynch, a member of the US Congress, was completely right to emphasize that the victory of the Democrats in the elections of 1874 in the northern states led to a sharp activization of the terrorist elements of the Democratic Party in the South. These latter gained "entire control of the party machinery in the Democratic Party".⁸⁸ This created favorable conditions for the Democrats to unleash an attack on the Reconstruction governments in the southern states.

Reconstruction concluded with virtually the direct betrayal of the Blacks by the North's bourgeoisie. The 1876 Presidential election gave a majority to neither the Republican candidate Hayes nor the Democrat Tilden. After secret negotiations between leaders of the two parties, the Republicans were recognized winners and sat their man in the Presidency. As a sign of gratitude, the new Republican government agreed to withdraw federal troops from the final three states where the Republicans still maintained power. The troops were withdrawn, and in April 1877 the planters seized power in these states. The North's bourgeoisie, having demonstrated thereby a classic example of the politics of class selfishness, proved the incompatibility of the fundamental class interests of broad masses of the Negro people and the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, one cannot regard the planters' return to power in all the former Confederate states as a complete victory on their part. They were unable to reinstate slavery in the South, which had been their maximum program.

Although they were able to preserve considerable vestiges of slavery there, on the whole, enormous areas of the South were on the road of capitalist development. The plantation owners' economic positions had been seriously undermined. A considerable redistribution of land property had taken place in the South with many of the northern bourgeois becoming large landowners there. The new balance of forces there did not allow the planters to regain their lost ruling positions at the federal level. Hereinafter they were doomed to play the part of junior partners to the mighty bourgeois circles of the North which were ever more consolidating their strength.

Lastly, despite Reconstruction's downfall, broad masses of the Negro people in the South had acquired great experience in the revolutionary struggle for their rights. These democratic and revolutionary traditions were used by later generations fighting for the elimination of all manifestations of racial discrimination.

Millions of black and white workingmen in the South became most vigorously involved in Reconstruction. This left a deep imprint on the events of this period and lent Reconstruction a bourgeois-democratic, revolutionary nature. Reconstruction was a sequel to the Civil War and the second stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1861-1877. However, it was something far less than the Civil War in terms of how many people took part in it, what forms and methods of struggle were used, and what results were achieved. It must also be borne in mind that the Civil War engulfed the entire country, while Reconstruction bore only a local character and was carried out only in the South. It was the descending stage of the second American revolution.

Chapter V

EMANCIPATION WITHOUT FREEDOM

"Shame on America for the Plight of the Negroes!"

The above-cited words of Lenin¹ are a concise summary of the Negro problem in the United States. The Negro issue played a highly important role in the two American revolutions. This is especially true of the Revolution of 1861-1877. And this fact just shows once again how important the problem of black Americans has been and continues to be in the US. The prime result of the two American revolutions for the Negro people was that by enduring the severest tribulations and great losses, black Americans had gained the abolition of slavery. Having done away with slavery in a bitter armed struggle, black Americans made a great contribution to the attaining of bourgeois-democratic liberties for the entire American people. The American people stand in debt to them for this tremendous historical achievement.

Liberation is an important landmark in the history of any people, but it is no less important to hold on to and develop it. The former slave owners were unable to bring slavery back during Reconstruction, but, when they seized power in the southern states, they set up the economic and political conditions for establishing a regime of heinous discrimination against and segregation of black Americans. As before, under slavery, the super-exploitation of Blacks continued to be the economic basis for the well-being of former slave owners and the new class of property owners which sprang up in the South during the second American revolution.

Revolutions always cause deep changes in a society's social structure, and the US did not turn out to be an exception to this general rule. The second American revolution led to the consolidation of bourgeois power throughout the country, including the former rebel Confederate states. Slavery's abolition and the enactment of the Homestead

Law served to give farming a powerful boost and stimulated a quantitative and qualitative changes in the body of American farmers. The Revolution paved the way for the development of capitalism in US agriculture along the American way. The Revolution's most important result was the creation of a single national market, which was an important factor in the rapid development of capitalism and the nation's industrial might. The working class burgeoned in size and its class consciousness grew. The Negro people could not be left out of these great socio-economic and political changes, but, as before, they were given a place in the outback of American society.

In the South, most Blacks were employed in agriculture. Not as farmers, though, but as share-croppers who were cruelly exploited. The political and civil rights of Blacks in the southern states were reduced to a mere fiction under the dictatorship of the planters. The North was no "promised land" for them either. The ruling classes of the North continued under the new historical circumstances to follow the old course of "divide and rule". They pitted white working people against Blacks so as to split their united front and consolidate their own supremacy over both. Another important stimulus for the super-exploitation of Blacks was their inflow to industry, which set up an additional reserve army of labor without which no capitalist country can function.

Deeply rooted racial prejudices within American society stimulated US capitalism's racist policies. White workers and farmers offered no effective help to Blacks during their revolutionary struggle of the Reconstruction period. The movement for an eight-hour work day had a great revolutionizing significance for the entire working class. Marx expressed a very high opinion of this movement: "The first fruit of the Civil War," he wrote, "was the eight hours' agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California."² But Blacks were largely left out of this mass movement of workers which had not only an important meaning for the United States, but for the rest of the world, too.

The most important landmarks in the widespread development of the populist movement in the US after Reconstruction and up to the modern period, which begins with the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, were

the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, the Granger and Greenback movements, and the Populists and Socialists. The movements differed in their class and social content, their program slogans, and the results they achieved, but their common trait was an underestimation of the importance of the Negro problem, their failure to understand the necessity of drawing broad masses of black working people into the class struggle, and the disregard of the vital necessity of an alliance between white and black workers.

Only a few years passed after Reconstruction and the Blacks ran up against a new serious trial. As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, the United States entered the age of imperialism. The transition of American capitalism to the monopolistic stage was marked by an intensification of the Negro problem. The situation which had developed in the US was more than ample evidence of the correctness of Lenin's conclusion that "the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression".³

The transition to imperialism confronted the Black Americans with fresh problems. They now faced a powerful bloc of the monopoly bourgeoisie and southern racist planters, who put to mass use the racial prejudices. The entry of the US in the stage of monopoly capitalism was marked by feverish economic growth, first of all in industrial production. Engels' prediction had come true. He wrote: "As soon as slavery—that greatest of obstacles to the political and social development of the United States—has been smashed, the country will experience a boom that will very soon assure it an altogether different place in the history of the world."⁴ The US really jumped forward in its economic development at a rate that no country had ever known up to then.

In 1860, the United States accounted for 15 percent of the world industrial output; in 1870, its share increased to 23 percent; from 1881 to 1885, it reached 29 percent. In 1860, the United States was the world's fourth industrial power; in 1894, it became the first.⁵ Railroad construction advanced at especially rapid rates: in 1860, the total length of track in operation was 49,285 kilometers; in 1880, 150,085 km. Agricultural production shot up. In 1859, the US produced one billion dollars worth of agricultural goods; in 1899, 4.9 billion. While the value of agricultural

and industrial goods produced from 1850 to 1860 was about equal, in 1880 the value of industrial goods was more than twice the value of agricultural goods.

The process of monopolization in the nation's economy was rapidly developing. By 1900, there were already 445 large industrial, bank, and transportation trusts in the US, with their total capital worth over 20 billion dollars. Having gained dominant position within the country, monopolists were no longer content with internal markets. They longed to get at capital investment spheres and at raw materials abroad as well as at foreign markets where they could sell their finished goods. But the young American imperialist predator did not risk encroaching on the colonial possessions of his powerful imperialist partners. The choice fell on the feeble Spanish colonial empire. In 1898, the United States provoked a war with Spain and without particular difficulty seized the last fragments of the once mighty Spanish colonial empire—the Philippine Islands, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

The process of foreign-policy expansion developed in parallel with a reactionary attack on working people's rights. The principal object of the attack were black Americans. By 1900, monopoly capital in the North had invested one billion dollars in the southern states. This resulted in complete control by northern capitalist circles over southern politics and economic activity. Thus, the super-exploitation of Blacks in the South, the system of discrimination and segregation created after the defeat of Reconstruction, were all the brain-child not only of the racist planters, but also of Wall Street's monopoly capital.

The transition of capitalism to the monopolistic stage was accompanied in the South by a jump in the barbaric practice of lynching Blacks. At the end of the 19th century, about 2,000 lynchings were registered in the South over a 13-year period. Every one of them was not merely a murder, but an act of refined sadism.

William E. B. DuBois, the well-known Negro historian, writer, sociologist, public figure, and outstanding fighter for racial equality, made an extremely important contribution to the struggle for the rights of Blacks, particularly with regard to the barbarous practice of lynching. He edited *The Crisis*, the mouthpiece of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), from 1910 to 1934, regularly informing readers about lynchings.

These documentary stories about lynchings were used by DuBois in his numerous novels. A brilliant writer with millions of readers both black and white, DuBois attracted the attention of American and international public opinion to the Negro problem in the United States in his literary works. This was an effective and very important form in the fight for the interests of the Negro people.

The history of the US Negro people shows that in the irreconcilable struggle between advocates and enemies of racial discrimination the clergymen, as a rule, have supported the official doctrine of racial discrimination and the super-exploitation of Blacks.

DuBois was one of those few proponents of the Negro liberation movement who took irreconcilable anti-clerical positions. In his literary and publicist works and numerous public appearances, DuBois exposed the hypocrisy of church people who used all the power of the Church to keep broad masses of the Negro people from adamantly opposing the barbaric practice of lynching and racial discrimination and to disarm Blacks ideologically and morally. DuBois portrays the clergy as a clan sharing identical views and vehemently opposing other church people who demanded that the Church be truthful and condemn lynchings.

DuBois lived a long and difficult life. He went from a schoolchild, who attended school literally on pennies, to a scholar of world renown, who received honorary degrees from universities in many countries, including the USSR. DuBois died in 1963 at the age of 95. All through his long life he remained true to his principles of fighting for justice, peace, and friendship between peoples. It is entirely logical, too, that this great American had, by the end of his life, joined the only party in the US which has consistently advocated these principles. In 1961, DuBois became a member of the Communist Party of the United States of America.

In figures published on lynching, many thousands of Blacks who were treacherously murdered around the corner have been left out. They do not include numerous facts about black Americans being beaten up, black women being raped, the homes of Afro-Americans being subject to arson, and many other displays of violence toward black citizens of the USA. Dread terror which has been carried out against Blacks under monopoly capitalism is not just historical coincidence. The Lynch law and the whole carefully worked out system of terror against Afro-Americans have been

used by the bourgeoisie and plantation owners as a way of compelling Blacks, through non-economic means, to work for considerably lower pay than white workers received. The Lynch law has brought enormous bloody dividends to monopoly capital, the real boss in the South.

Such was and still today is the economic basis for racial discrimination which has especially flourished in the US in the period of imperialism. This is a natural phenomenon from the point of view of the laws governing the development of a class, exploiter society. The tremendous development of productive forces has created all the necessary economic conditions for making tremendous super-profits by exploiting the labor of Afro-Americans.

The unity of working people of all races and nationalities has been and still remains the true nightmare for exploiters. Splitting the working people along racial, national, and religious lines is the principle that the ruling classes of the exploiter society are guided by at all stages of its development. Wherever it proves possible to introduce divisions along racial or national lines, the ruling classes have especially favorable chances to attain their goals. Lenin explained it by the fact that national and racial prejudices are the most stable and the hardest of all to overcome.

During the transition to imperialism, the planters, enlisting the firm support of the bourgeoisie, squeezed Blacks completely out of politics in the South. All the southern states passed discriminatory laws which left Blacks out of the election system by making them pay a poll tax, or hold educational, residence, or other qualifications. The system of public education created during Reconstruction was revised, and the practice of segregating Blacks in all public places was introduced. In summing up the Negroes' lack of economic, political, and civil rights in the South, Lenin said: "The position of the Negroes in America *in general* is one unworthy of a civilised country."⁶

In the North, the economic conditions, legislation, and historical traditions created immeasurably better circumstances for Blacks than those that existed in the South. But racist sentiments were widely felt in the North, too, and Afro-Americans were often slighted as inferior people.

US monopoly capital celebrated its birth by creating a system of discrimination and segregation with respect to America's black population. It seemed that, having had

all vigor squeezed out of it by widespread repressions, and being pent up in the ghettos of northern cities and on the plantations of the South, the black movement had been forever crushed by the iron heel of capital. But the US Negro people still had strength enough to challenge the bloc of monopoly capital and plantation owners, the powerful governmental and judicial machine, and the racial prejudices artificially cultivated by reaction. The Niagara Movement, which DuBois helped to start in July 1905, was a true spark of light in the reign of dark terror and heinous discrimination against colored Americans.⁷ In July of that year, DuBois called a conference of opponents of Booker T. Washington at Fort Erie on the Canadian bank of the Niagara River. It is noteworthy that the conference met at the place where the Underground Railroad had terminated by means of which many black slaves fled their masters.

The conference undertook an all-out program against racial discrimination and segregation in the United States. In recognition of DuBois' great service in fighting for the rights of black Americans, he was elected general secretary of a new organization of Blacks created at the conference. By that time, DuBois had become the most popular figure in the US Negro movement after Booker T. Washington. In contrast to many active members of this movement, DuBois vehemently opposed Washington, who was trying to lead Blacks away from a decisive battle for their legal rights by accepting slight pittances from the monopolistic bourgeoisie.

"The formation of the Niagara Movement," wrote William Foster, "marked a turning point in the history of the Negro people. It was both a revolt against the stifling reactionary bureaucracy of Booker T. Washington and the beginning of a more militant policy of struggle against the Jim Crows and lynchers..."

"In developing the fighting position of the Niagara Movement in opposition to Washington's surrender line, Dr. DuBois proved himself to be one of the greatest of Negro spokesmen."⁸

Niagara was the first militant black organization which tried to unite the efforts of the US Blacks in their struggle for equal rights under a new alignment of class forces created by the transition of American capitalism to the monopolistic stage of development. The movement headed by Dr. DuBois

was an important moral incentive for black Americans. It opened new horizons for them in their struggle against the united bloc of the monopoly bourgeoisie, southern plantation owners, and multifarious coalitions of racists from the southern and northern states. This movement inflicted a great blow on Booker T. Washington and his time-serving tactic of getting some trifle for the minority of Blacks at the cost of virtually betraying the vital interests of the overwhelming majority of the black population. It is no wonder that Booker T. Washington's star began to gradually fade after the Niagara Movement was formed. His only positive contribution was that his activities helped make clear to Blacks that no tactics of maneuver or petty concessions could resolve the fundamental problems of the Negro people of the USA.

World War I

World War I and the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 were of great importance for the struggle by Blacks to do away with racial discrimination. The United States made billions of dollars on war orders and then entered the war in April 1917, when the time had come to think about who would get the plentiful spoils of the world war. It was a matter of repartitioning spheres of influence in the colonial and dependent countries and obtaining profitable sources of raw materials and areas for capital investment. The US entered the war to the deafening roar of high-flown chauvinist propaganda. The official version of how the country got into the war claimed that for the sake of democracy and justice the "German barbarians" had to be crushed and all the peoples of the world guaranteed peace for time immemorial.

The turbid wave of chauvinism and pseudo-patriotic sentiments gripped a certain fraction of the black Americans, as well. Even DuBois was confused by this propaganda for a time. He wrote in *The Crisis* that the "greatest hope for ultimate democracy, with no ... barriers of race and color, lies on the side of the Allies".⁹ He called Negroes to take part in the war, hoping that this would stimulate the US authorities to abolish racial discrimination and segregation. *The Crisis* put forth a whole series of definite demands by Blacks under the specific circumstances of wartime. It fa-

vored granting them the right to use weapons and get the necessary military training to fight for their homeland. Meritorious black soldiers should be allowed to train in officers' camps, after which they could command Negro troops. *The Crisis* demanded that lynchings be halted immediately, that coloreds be given voting rights, that segregation in schools and in public transport be abolished, that equal opportunities for Blacks be introduced in all governmental offices and all areas of public life.

Not only DuBois, but many other black leaders also came out to various degrees in favor of the US entering the war. They were thrown off by promises broadcast by American ruling circles to resolve the Negro problem after the world war was over. President Woodrow Wilson stated: "With thousands of young sons in the camps and in France, out of this conflict you [Blacks—*R. I.*] must expect nothing less than the enjoyment of full citizenship rights—the same as are enjoyed by every other citizen."¹⁰

Those on the political left had no illusions on this account. The Negro magazine *Messenger*, which was edited by Socialists, asked its readers in January 1918: "Since when has the subject race come out of a war with its rights and privileges accorded for such participation?... Did not the Negro fight in the Revolutionary War, with Crispus Attucks dying first ... and come out to be a miserable chattel slave in this country for nearly one hundred years after?... Did not the Negro take part in the Spanish-American War?... And have not prejudice and race hate grown in this country since 1898?"¹¹ Soon Negroes had to abandon their hopes that their participation in the war would help solve the race problem. When military necessity forced the US government to resort to conscripting Blacks into the army, the problem of racial discrimination, this time in the army, once again became sharply felt.

Negro organizations carried on a stubborn struggle so that black soldiers would be commanded by black officers, and not white. The War Department used all kinds of excuses to delay the problem's settlement, but at length was compelled to open an officers' school for 1,200 coloreds, the first of its kind. There remained the question of who would take charge of this special military academy. Blacks were entirely right to believe the job should go to Colonel Charles Young, the only Black in the entire US armed forces with the rank of colonel. He was a West Point graduate

with long service in the army—twenty-eight years. Personal bravery, energy, willpower, and real talent as a military leader were some of the attributes of this outstanding military figure who was the pride of the entire Negro people. But to everyone's surprise, the honored veteran was suddenly retired. The War Department tried to justify its decision by citing Colonel Young's health. The awkwardness of this ruse was obvious to all: aside from all his other positive qualities, old Colonel Young was as fit as a bull. To refute the judgement of the army medical experts, Young rode his horse several hundred miles from his home in Ohio to the US capital. But even this sports record would not rock the judgement of military officials. On July 30, 1917, Colonel Young was released from the army on the grounds that his health demanded it.

The real reason was entirely different. Young had been wearing colonel's stripes for a long time and by all indications was due to be promoted to general. But the southern army oligarchy was aghast at the very thought that a black man might be wearing general's stars and considered it a most dangerous precedent for the nation's armed forces. The reactionary general staff preferred to retire an honored officer from the army in spite of the fact that the military needed his services, since it had recruited hundreds of thousands of Blacks over the war period.

If the forces of reaction made short shrift of this eminent military man whose name was known far beyond US borders, then ordinary black officers and soldiers were subject to persecution with all the less ceremony. Paradoxically enough, black soldiers drafted into the army in the northern states had an especially rough time of it. In many cases Blacks in these states were called into the army one at a time; occasionally a regiment would have only one colored soldier in it, and he was subject to severe discrimination. This soldier would be regarded as a leper and be kept completely apart from others and slighted in all means and manners. At times the consequences of treating colored soldiers in such manner were tragic. A black soldier in Ohio, for instance, cut his throat after being taunted by racists. The drafting of Afro-Americans created such thorny problems that for a time their admission into the army had to be held up so that some way of resolving the problem of segregating colored GI's could be found.

In the meantime, the United States was getting more and

more involved in the military actions in Europe. The war turned out to be less of a quick fling than some of the nation's leaders had anticipated. The huge and voracious monster of war swallowed up division upon division. The gigantic European theater of military actions needed ever new deliveries of cannon fodder, and so US ruling circles had to start drafting Blacks again en masse. Afro-Americans made up ten percent of the country's population but thirteen percent of the armed forces. All in all, 367,000 Blacks were drafted into the US Army during World War I, 200,000 of whom crossed the ocean to take direct part in the war.

In Europe, too, black soldiers and officers had to endure very cruel discrimination. In France, for example, they were prohibited from going out with French women, going to dances, or going to public places where there might be Whites. General Pershing's staff was particularly celebrated for its racist pranks. The General himself cast filth on his Black soldiers and officers by warning the French that consorting with black soldiers was like associating with "rapists" and "degenerates". This was the same General Pershing who, in pointing out the great military merits of Negro regiments, had declared that no better regiments had served under his nation's colors than those in which black soldiers fought.

On July 14, 1919, Bastille Day in France, a large victory parade was held in Paris. Sub-units of black soldiers marched along with the French Army. It was only the American troops that took part in the parade that did not have a single colored soldier. This was just one more proof that colored Americans still had a bitter struggle ahead of them before they would be able to seize the Bastille of racial prejudices and discrimination in their own land.

Black soldiers back in the United States were in a most trying predicament which actually went as far as outright armed clashes. One of the largest and most tragic of such clashes took place in Houston, Texas, in August 1917. A regiment of Blacks, many of whom were drafted in New York, was stationed in Houston. Coming from the North, the Blacks refused to obey Texas segregation laws. Local racists provoked an armed slaughter which led to the deaths of sixteen Whites, including four policemen, and four Blacks. The trial was a prompt and unfair one: nineteen black soldiers were hung and many others given life sentences. In that same year, another tragic incident took place in

East St. Louis, where striking white workers lynched black workers. The reaction of American authorities to these two events is characteristic. W.E.B. DuBois illustrated it in a special table:

HOUSTON

Crime: 17 Whites killed
Penalty: 19 colored soldiers hung; 51 colored soldiers given life imprisonment; 40 colored soldiers imprisoned for various terms.

EAST ST. LOUIS

Crime: 125 Blacks killed
Penalty: 9 Whites given prison sentences of from 5 to 15 years; 11 Whites given one year each; 18 Whites fined; 10 coloreds sentenced each to 14 years in prison.

The tragic events in Houston and East St. Louis were an ominous reminder that President Wilson's widely heralded promises to eliminate racial discrimination after the war's end were worth no more than the paper they were written on. What is more, Wilson, a native of the southern state of Virginia, made direct concessions to the Ku Klux Klan—right out of the racist traditions of the South. The Klan's leaders bluntly declared that they were going to unleash a storm of repressions, up to the lynching of Blacks returning from the front. The latter had been in hopes that the abolition of racial discrimination awaited them in their homeland.

Just as black military personnel were getting ready to come back from France, President Wilson sent Dr. Robert Moton over to hold appropriate talks with Negro soldiers. Moton was especially chosen for the job as successor to his mentor, Booker T. Washington, as director of the Tuskegee Institute. The Institute taught Blacks various professions, which Washington saw as a panacea for all the evils which his fellow tribesmen encountered.

A well-known Negro historian Woodson has written that "Dr. Moton bluntly told the Negro soldiers that on their return home they must not expect in the United States the democracy they had enjoyed in France... The message infuriated the Negro soldiers... Some of these soldiers talked of doing Dr. Moton bodily injury, but the discipline of the Army prevented any such development."¹² Dr. Moton did not conceal the bitter truth from the black soldiers: lack of rights, racial discrimination, terror of the Ku Klux Klan, and the machinations of other such organizations awaited the veterans triumphantly returning home.

World War II

World War I had a very great impact on the movement by colored Americans to win equal rights with Whites. At the same time, Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa Movement was also under way. This movement distracted colored Americans from the struggle for their vital rights, since it urged them to flee their troubles by emigrating to Africa. All the same, black Americans stood in support of Garvey's movement, since it took account of the serious advances which had taken place in the situation of colored Americans as a result of the war.

These advances were enormous in scope and led to radical changes throughout the entire social structure of the gainfully employed black population. The war had given great impetus to the development of military industry and fields of industrial production connected with it. Hundreds of thousands of workers were needed, paving the way for an unprecedented migration of the colored population in the US. In the period from 1915 to 1918 alone, no fewer than 500,000 Blacks resettled from southern states to northern ones. From 1910 through 1930, over a million Blacks moved from "Black Belt" regions of the South to the North. This mass migration had a great impact on both the position of colored Americans and on the development of the movement against racial oppression. The Negro proletariat was growing at a hectic rate, opening new and auspicious prospects for the liberation movement of colored Americans.

The first years after the war, especially during the crisis of 1920-1921, placed terrible burdens on colored Americans. The economic difficulties were compounded by terror against them carried out by groups of Ku Klux Klansmen. The racist thugs struck most savagely at colored soldiers who had returned from the frontlines of the World War. The lynchers strove to paralyze the will to fight of this most militant and energetic detachment of colored warriors against racial inequality. *The Nation* magazine wrote: "The Negro fighting in Europe was not simply fighting Germans, he was fighting indirectly for his privileges at home. With what result?... There were sixty-two lynchings in 1918—twenty-four more than in 1917."¹³

Even when the Reconstruction governments were on their way out there was less organized violence against colored Americans than in this period. Blacks were beaten

with birch rods, branded with sulfuric acid, hung and burned in fires. The history of the long-suffering Negro people never before knew such savage racial hatred as was nurtured by monopoly capital. In 1919 alone, 77 Blacks were lynched. Ten of these were soldiers, and several of them were lynched in their uniforms. Eleven Blacks were burned alive in fires. According to far from complete figures, racists lynched 219 Negroes from 1914 to 1920.

The wave of violence swept through a string of cities. From May through December 1919, twenty-six major racial conflicts took place and not in one single instance did the police act to defend the colored citizens against the racist thugs responsible for the savagery. Even the nation's capital became the scene of fierce clashes between coloreds and racists. Violence raged in Washington for three days, engulfing the whole city. Blacks gave the instigators determined armed resistance.

The South went into action for the first time after Reconstruction. In Elaine, Arkansas, black cotton-pickers formed a union and began buying fire-arms to stand up for their rights. The plantation owners inflicted a forestalling blow, provoked a shoot-out which took two white lives, and troops immediately thereafter turned up in Elaine. A pogrom was begun; shots rang out throughout the district; plantations were ablaze; all Whites capable of bearing weapons were given them. One hundred Blacks and five Whites were killed during the pogrom. Twelve Blacks were sentenced to death and 67 to lengthy jail terms. Having crushed the armed resistance of the Blacks, the authorities carried out mass arrests. Blacks were beaten with metal-studded leather whips; one such blow split the skin right down to the bone. Those arrested were tortured by electricity and drugs inducing suffocation were used.

The Chicago racist riots of July 1919 were particularly bitter and bloody. Some racist brutes pelted a black youth with stones and then drowned him. Shocked coloreds gave the thugs a real fight which did not let up for thirteen days. The bitter shooting went on both day and night. Cars raced along the darkened streets of the city belching out gunfire. According to official, and obviously purposely lowered, data, 380 persons were killed and 520 more wounded during the riots. Buildings in black districts of the city were riddled with bullet holes; roofs and walls had caved in in hundreds of burned and bombed out houses, and the entire city was

enveloped in smoke from the blazes. Troops and police brought into the city joined forces with the white riot-inciters and crushed the armed resistance of the Blacks. An investigation was initiated which, as always, found the Afro-Americans guilty. Charges were brought against seventeen coloreds but only four Whites.

Black soldiers who had returned from the war were especially active in putting up armed resistance. DuBois, addressing black war veterans in his magazine, wrote: "We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting."¹⁴

The sharp aggravation of anti-Negro sentiments was brought about by the overall economic situation and its political overtones: the reactionaries tried hard to solve the economic difficulties of the post-war period by shifting to Blacks a goodly share of the expenses connected with the reconversion and overcoming of crisis phenomena in industry and agriculture. This caused a sharp defensive reaction on the part of Afro-Americans, and then terror, the old and tested means of keeping them "in their place", was set in motion.

The massive repressions against Blacks in the post-war period were also elicited by the fact that 200,000 Afro-Americans who had taken part in the war came back from Europe determined to be paid for the promise the US government had given them when they were sent to the frontlines there. They demanded the equal rights they had been promised and racists saw that the only way to head off these demands was to use mass terror against the growing Negro movement.

And, of course, of tremendous importance was the triumph of the October Revolution in far-away Russia, which caused much reverberation in the United States. The Communist Party was created in the US in 1919. Progressive American workers took an active part in the international movement "Hands Off Soviet Russia". This movement was the response by the broad working masses throughout the world to the intervention of fourteen capitalist countries, including the USA, against Soviet Russia. The movement demanded that their governments recall their troops from Soviet Russia and halt military, economic, financial, and other aid to the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia.

The revolution in Russia destroyed the tsarist prison for peoples and smashed the doors of the multinational Russian Bastille. The very first decisions of the Soviet Government

on the equal rights of all nations and nationalities made an enormous impression on millions of black Americans. William Foster wrote: "The Negro people especially reacted favorably. They were doubly impressed because of the Soviet Union's policy of equality among the various nationalities living within its borders and also because of its demonstrated friendship toward the colonial peoples of the world."¹⁵

The socialist revolution in Russia and the intensified class struggle in the US from 1917 to 1919 terrified the American bourgeoisie. Lenin wrote: "In America ... everything that looks like Bolshevism is fiercely persecuted."¹⁶

Racist organizations and especially members of the notorious Ku Klux Klan, which "was as much a product of the Red Scare, as an instigator",¹⁷ were in the front ranks of the inciters of violence.

Ku Klux Klan terror was directed not only against Blacks, but against Jews and immigrants, as well. The Klan labeled all who had immigrated to the US "agents of Lenin". It cannot be said that this crude anti-communism did not give results. "A very lurid picture of Bolshevism has been presented to the American public... The American farmer or villager reads about them, loses his temper, cleans up his shotgun, curses 'them foreigners' and joins the Ku Klux Klan."¹⁸

The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia was an important stimulus for the activization of the Negro liberation movement. American racists hurried to take preventive measures to restrain a new rise of the Negro movement by means of the most heinous terror.

Blacks coming back from the frontlines of the world war were forced to wage a determined struggle for their rights, not least of which in the area of economics. Reconversion, the crisis of 1920-1921, the harsh economic chaos of the post-war period—all made it extremely tough for Blacks to find a job and earn a living. But none of these difficulties could compare with the catastrophe which broke out in 1929—the Great Depression. The volume of production in basic areas of industry plummeted and was soon cut back by 50 percent; agricultural production dropped in price from 8.5 to 4 billion dollars. The country was inundated with bankruptcies; workers' salaries on the average were cut in half, and the number of unemployed topped seven-teen million. Toiling masses of Blacks were the first victims

of the Depression. There were twice as many black unemployed as white, and the black worker's salary was a third lower than his white workmate's.

The forces of reaction used the trying economic shocks to aggravate racial antagonisms. As always during violent social conflicts, anti-Negro actions were greatly intensified: 150 Blacks were lynched during the Depression. Hundreds of thousands of coloreds lost their jobs. At the same time, the Depression was an important school in the class struggle for Blacks: they took an active part in strikes, demonstrations, and in the youth and women's movements—in all forms of struggle by American working people for their rights.

The world depression hit the United States, the most powerful country in the capitalist world, especially hard. It threatened not only the economic, but also the political foundations of American society. Influential circles of monopoly capital actively supported President Franklin Roosevelt's anti-crisis program which Roosevelt instituted after his election in 1932. The program, called "The New Deal", amounted to using all the might of state-monopoly capital to seek ways of escaping from the socio-economic dead-ends of the Great Depression.

The attitude of Blacks toward President Roosevelt's New Deal was shaped by the fact that the various measures to provide the jobless with work and/or compensation to a certain extent eased the disastrous position of many colored families. Roosevelt's economic policies generated reformist illusions among a considerable part of the colored working population, which created new complications in the organization of a mass movement by Blacks for the elimination of racial discrimination and segregation. The improvement of the economic situation in the 1930s helped Roosevelt solve the problem which no president before him had been able to solve: the creation of a voting alliance uniting the most dyed-in-the-wool racists of the South with broad masses of colored laborers. The Roosevelt administration did not, however, take any steps to resolve the problems of racial discrimination and segregation on a national scale. Hence, no act of political tightrope-walking, even by so talented a statesman as Roosevelt, could spare the nation's ruling circles from new tremors in inter-racial relations.

The misanthropic theories of fascism, the racist practices

of German and Italian fascism in Spain and Ethiopia were evidence of the fact that fascism represented a fatal threat to the future of all nations and particularly of colored peoples. Blacks were among the first Americans to oppose fascism. The best representatives of the Negro people took the most active part in the prewar period in anti-fascist demonstrations and meetings. The US Negro press immediately assumed a definite anti-fascist position after the Nazis came to power in Germany.

Several hundred Blacks left for Spain after the Civil War began there in order to make their personal contribution to the armed struggle with fascism. Black Americans accomplished numerous feats-of-arms on the frontlines of the Spanish Civil War and many were made officers as a result. Fascist Italy's aggression against Ethiopia elicited a storm of protest from black Americans. Evidence of the political maturity of Afro-Americans, wrote American historian J. S. Redding, was the fact that "Negro newspapers made banner headlines of the war and inveighed against 'the connivance of England and France' in blocking the sanctions against Italy proposed by Russia".¹⁹ From their meager means, colored Americans rendered significant material aid to the victims of fascist aggression in Ethiopia.

When the US entered the war against Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, black Americans took the war as a matter of their concern. The Negro people were convinced that the defeat of fascism was in their own vital interest. This is why Blacks so enthusiastically joined the US armed forces despite the fact that the severest racial discrimination and segregation awaited them there. The race problem in the US was especially keenly felt during the war. Racial conflicts were all the more dangerous in that each side in the war was concerned about having a solid rear without social, inter-racial, or other conflicts.

The liberating, anti-fascist nature of the Second World War could not help but stimulate the liberation movement (struggle for liberation from racial oppression) of the US Negro people. But while the war was going on against fascism, which was refined racism, there were numerous instances of racial oppression of the black people in the US, who made up ten percent of the country's population.

Discrimination in the area of production hit the hardest blow at the vital interests of Blacks. This form of racial discrimination had particularly far-reaching consequences

for Afro-Americans owing to the fact that, since they did not have economic opportunities equal to those of Whites, Blacks were deprived of the prospects of improving their position in all areas of life. Blacks could not depend on the extremely serious housing problem's being resolved. The high tuition necessary to attend colleges robbed Negro youth of the hope of getting a higher education. This, in turn, doomed the young generation of Blacks to a life of eternal vegetation. They were forced to remain all their lives in the backs of American society and could count on getting only the hardest and worst-paying jobs. It was a vicious circle which many a generation of Afro-Americans had already tried to find an escape from. Forever seeking a crust of bread, the great majority of Negroes had no opportunity of creating normal conditions for the cultural development of the up-and-coming generation of Negro youth. Discrimination against Blacks in the area of production flourished even under the favorable economic circumstances created by the beginning of World War II.

The war gave the arms industry a great boost and opened up hundreds of thousands of new jobs there, but black workers were discriminated against in the most cruel manner, even at companies working on government military contracts. Government leaders long bartered with black leaders over trivialities before Roosevelt, on June 25, 1941, signed an executive order on fair hiring practices. This was done under the threat that Blacks would carry out a great march on Washington on July 1, 1941. It was anticipated that between 50,000 and 100,000 would have taken part in this anti-racist demonstration to protest against the practice of barring Blacks from working in the arms industry and against racial discrimination in the armed forces. Black leaders were satisfied with the order, which was never fully enacted, however. The Washington march did not take place.

The problem of discrimination against Blacks in the US armed forces was a highly sensitive one during the war. On August 1, 1945, there were 1,030,255 Blacks in the US Army, about nine percent of the personnel in the nation's armed forces. But about 90 percent of black servicemen were used for various kinds of harsh jobs and only ten percent were used in fighting divisions. Blacks were discriminated against in becoming officers. By the war's end, there were 7,768 black officers, which was less than one

percent of all black servicemen (this figure was 11 percent among Whites). Only one Black was a brigadier general of the 776 generals in the US military services. There were only 7 Afro-Americans from a total of 5,220 colonels. Generally, the black officer did not progress any higher in rank than lieutenant.

A disgusting racist practice was common in the US Army: the blood of black donors could not be used to treat injured white servicemen. The sentences of court martials in the case of Blacks were frequently open reprisals against them, particularly in those cases where they had tried to do something about racial segregation in the army. Independent army units were generally formed for Blacks, ranging in size right up to regiments and divisions. It was only toward the end of the war that a few black platoons were included among white troops. Segregation in the navy was broken down only in the summer of 1944, when several hundred Blacks were assigned to combat ships. But even at the war's end, 95 percent of Blacks worked in the galley, or helped run the mess halls, take care of the crew's quarters, etc.

Many black Americans demonstrated courage, fighting in Europe and the Pacific. Dorrie Miller, for instance, was serving on the USS *West Virginia* when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. In spite of fierce Japanese fire, he would not stop shooting his machine gun and downed four Japanese planes. First Lieutenant Vernon Baker destroyed three enemy machine-gun nests, killing and wounding nine Nazis. Private Ernest Jenkins destroyed a machine-gun nest and captured fifteen prisoners.²⁰ And there were numerous other such feats by black servicemen. Although many of them received American orders and medals, not one received the Medal of Honor—the highest award of the USA. This is all the more striking since 21 Blacks earned it during the Civil War and seven during the Spanish-American War.

Black servicemen continued to be discriminated against and segregated on US territory, especially in the southern states. In March 1943, a black sergeant was killed on a Little Rock (Arkansas) street by a policeman. In that same year, on the day commemorating soldiers who had died in action, the sheriff of Jenterville (Mississippi) shot and killed a black soldier on the street.

The Allied landing in Europe once more presented the American Command with the problem of discrimination

against Blacks in the US armed forces. The anti-fascist, liberating nature of the Second World War made facts of racial segregation and discrimination against US servicemen particularly intolerable. On May 12, 1944, General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Western Europe, issued an order to all commanding officers that spoke of the equal opportunities and rights of every American soldier both on and off duty regardless of rank, race, skin color, or religious belief.

The war was won and Blacks had made their special contribution to the military defeat of German Nazism and Japanese militarism. The widely heralded declarations by American political and military leaders during the war that racial discrimination in the armed forces must be done away with were not backed up by practical action. Discrimination in the US armed forces, which fought on all fronts in World War II, was preserved.

Those fighting for the liberation of the Negro people used these facts of racial intolerance for the activation of the movement of black Americans for equal rights with Whites and for raising their political awareness. In many newspapers and magazines and in the public statements of active participants in the Negro movement it was stated that racial persecution was the shame of America and that this aspect of the American way of life hardly differed at all from the theory and practice of fascism. The journal *Commonweal* said in September 1945: "In a war ostensibly fought against a racist ideology we ourselves have practiced precisely the same ideology."²¹ *The Crisis* put the question in even sharper terms: What is the difference "between American Democracy and Hitlerism?"²² A black college student said: "The Army jimmies us. The Navy lets us serve only as messmen. The Red Cross refuses our blood. Employers and labor unions shut us out. Lynchings continue. We are disfranchised, jimmied, spat upon. What more could Hitler do than that?"²³

Ministers of religion were also confirmed zealots of racial segregation. Many units had the following discriminatory schedule of church services: "Catholics, Jews, Protestants, and Negroes". A black soldier who had served on an air force base said: "It is not like being in a soldier camp. It is more like being in a prison." A white soldier told how his superiors forbade him from having any contact with black soldiers. He said: "Of course the Negro draftees are segregated from the minute they come into the camp... The whole pic-

ture is a very raw and ugly one. It looks, smells, and tastes like fascism."²⁴

Such a sharp statement of the issue was in no way an exaggeration. The racist practice of the American reaction was to a great extent the same kind of phenomenon as fascism, both of which were based on the division of people into higher and lower races with all the attendant consequences of such a division. Discrimination against American servicemen during World War II was essentially a problem of youth, since the great majority of the army was, for quite obvious reasons, made up of young men. The youth who had gotten their military baptism on the frontlines fighting fascism were especially indisposed to any demonstration of racism.

Fascism's defeat in the war opened new and encouraging horizons for progressive forces in the US fighting to eradicate the shameful manifestations of racial discrimination and segregation. The necessity of stepping up this struggle was all the more evident since four years of war had done nothing to resolve the vital needs of the black people of the US.

The war had ended. Hundreds of thousands of Blacks returned to their homes, coming back to what they had left when they went to the front at the start of the war. Laws allowing racial segregation in public places were still in effect in 17 states. Blacks were by law segregated on public transportation in 14 states. Extreme racial segregation flourished in southern schools and colleges. On the average, the black worker earned half as much as the white worker for the same job.

Chapter VI

FASCISM DEFEATED, RACISM PRESERVED

America's Black Bottom

Just as during the war, the migration of millions of Negroes went on after the war, too. This had great impact on the living conditions of a considerable fraction of black Americans. There were two clearly discernible trends to this migration: from South to North and West, and from the countryside to the city. The dimensions of this resettling of an entire people may be deduced from the fact that 90 percent of Blacks lived in the South in 1900, 77 percent in 1940, 68 percent in 1950, 60 percent in 1960, and 53 percent in 1979.

Belonging to the black race creates a whole string of serious problems for Americans and for that reason not all colored Americans rush to declare what race they belong to. In 1979, 53 percent of black-skinned Americans lived in the South. Thirty-nine percent of Blacks were in the northern states, the most progressively oriented and organized part of black US citizens, and eight percent lived in the nation's West.

Blacks were and are pariahs in American society. That being a black citizen causes serious problems is convincingly shown by the case of Susie Phipps, the wife of a rich Louisiana merchant. At the age of 48, she learned that the laws of her state made her a "colored", since her great-great-great-grandmother Margarita, who lived some 200 odd years ago, had been a Negro slave. "Denigrated", Susie went to court to "save" her reputation. Anthropologists, sociologists, and genealogists took part in the noisy court trial. In the course of the trial, Susie Phipps was charged not only with concealing her radical affiliation, but with violating another of the state's laws: in 1969, she buried her parents in a cemetery for Whites.

It would seem Susie Phipps case was merely a personal issue attesting to the obscurantism of the Louisiana racists. But the story made great public reverberations throughout

the country. Negro organizations came to her defense. Why? She was, after all, renouncing her "colored past". She thought it humiliating, unworthy of her. The answer to this question is given in sociologist Dan Thompson's argument. Thompson was himself the great-grandson of a black slave from the state of Georgia. As regards the Louisiana trial, Thompson wrote in *The New York Times*, "Susie Phipps ... is emphasizing something we've said all along: It is a great advantage to be white in American society. It costs several thousand dollars a year to be black. Schools, clubs, economic advantages are still to this day much better if you are white..."

"I hope her case will dramatize the foolishness of Race as a criterion in our society. I would like to see this distinction abolished. I would like to see racial designation gone. When you apply for a job and somebody asks you your race, it's demeaning. What the hell difference does it make? You're an American citizen..."

"I would say that race does make a difference, and if I were here, by God, I'd try to get it changed too if I could."¹ Black Americans have a bitter but well-founded joke: our society of equal opportunities is like chess: white to play and win.

Discrimination against millions of black Americans is a convincing illustration of the well-known conclusion of Lenin's that imperialism is characterized by an intensification of all reactionary currents. "Whatever the political system the result ... is everywhere reaction... Particularly intensified becomes the yoke of national oppression."² Naturally, one of the forms of protest by black Americans against this yoke is their mass flight from those places where racial discrimination is manifested in particularly intensified forms. Lenin devoted great attention to the migrational processes among black Americans. Characterizing the situation in the American South in the early period of imperialism, he wrote that "its population is fleeing to other capitalist areas and to the towns".³

The resettlement of millions of Blacks can be attributed first of all to important advances in economics. The capitalist rationalization of agriculture leads not only to a rise in labor productivity in agricultural production, but, at the same time, turns millions of Afro-Americans who were employed mainly in agriculture into unemployed.

Driven by want, Blacks left their homes for the North and West, a painful and trying procedure. The great American

Benjamin Franklin had been entirely correct when he said 200 years before that one move was tantamount to three fires. Obviously, there had to be the most serious motivating factors for Negro families with numerous children to pick up and move to the unknown of the northern and western states. Certainly, it was not only economic factors, either, that brought on the mass migration of the Negro populace. The South always had been the region where Blacks were most savagely exploited, but in no other period in US history has there ever been such a turbulent process of Negro migration as after the Second World War. It is important to note that capital, which had run up against a powerful and well-organized workers' movement, began migrating to the South in the post-war period, as the South had always had a surplus work force and workers' salaries were consequently a good deal less than in the North. In addition, one must consider that the industrialization process developed quickly in the southern states after the war because of their internal resources.

By the mid-fifties, one-fourth of all US industry was concentrated in the South. 36 percent of all oil, coal, and chemicals, 99 percent of tobacco products, 95 percent of synthetic textiles, 80 percent of cotton products, 40 percent of paper and furniture were produced in the southern states. There were 110 aviation factories in the South, and 2,000 electrical equipment factories. There were altogether 33,000 different kinds of industrial plants in the southern states whereas in 1940 there had been only 11,000. There were 700,000 workers in the textile mills; "more than 500,000 of them toil in the lumber and wood products industries; and some 320,000 are to be found in food processing funds... Nearly a quarter of a million workers are engaged in oil extraction and in the processing of coal and oil products, while over 200,000 are in chemical industries."⁴ The General Electric Corporation transferred 15 of its plants to the South. General Motors and Ford, the automobile makers, also transferred some of their businesses to the southern states. The oil empire of the Rockefellers and the chemical empire of the Du Ponts were deeply rooted there, too. Employers did not conceal the reasons they chose to go South. The owner of one firm in Alabama, for example, said that factories would be set up in Birmingham and small communities in Alabama, where there was surplus labor. There were people willing to work in a spirit of cooperation, and their

work was efficient and highly productive. The powerful industrial potential of the South grew from year to year, which created the opportunity for absorbing a good portion of the surplus work force in the southern states. But all the same, millions of Blacks continued to relocate from the South to the North. This was in large measure due to the fact that the transition to imperialism and the rapid development of monopoly capital in the period of scientific and technological revolution were accompanied by a new intensification of racial oppression. The South had always been stamping grounds for racism and it is natural that racial discrimination at this time would grow first of all in the southern states.

Unable to oppose the well organized and unified forces of reaction, Blacks migrated from the South to the North. The migration process of black Americans became so feverish that it left its imprint on the situation in the country and their struggle.

The North is in no way a Promised Land for Afro-Americans, who likewise encounter there hiring discrimination, discrimination in renting or buying homes and in getting an education. Unemployment, slums, and cultural backwardness are the lot of many hundreds of thousands of residents in black ghettos in the northern states. Racism, the social cancer of the 20th century, has spread its metastases far and wide in the northern states. Nevertheless, the North was and still is a far better place for Blacks to reside than the South, where even today the harshest discrimination and segregation are still flourishing.

The migration of millions of black Americans to the North put the problem in a completely different socio-economic and geographic plane compared even with the first years following World War II. The inevitable result has been the rapid proletarianization of black Americans, i.e., black Americans moving to the northern states have been able to find work chiefly at industrial factories. A major change in the social structure of the nation's black population took place in the post-war years. No other US population group was to such a degree exposed to proletarianization as Blacks were. In 1940, more than half the black population resided in the rural South. The great majority of them were tenants, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, and domestic servants living in semi-slave conditions. If one counts Afro-Americans whose immediate employment was agriculture, they amounted

to 32.8 percent of the active black population in 1940, but in 1964, only 6.9 percent.

Lenin wrote in 1915 that, "the typical Negro farmer is a tenant... They are chiefly semi-feudal or ... semi-slave *share-croppers*."⁵ Twenty five years later, in 1940, the situation of the black farmer in the South differed little from Lenin's description. In 1940, there were 507,000 Negro farms in the South which were based on the semi-slave systems of tenancy or share-cropping. By 1964 this figure had been cut back by over a factor of six, at 82,000. The process was to continue in subsequent years, as well. The collapse of the tenancy system was equal in nature to a genuine socio-economic revolution. The tenancy system, as the economic basis for the racist enslavement of broad masses of the black people in the South, collapsed under the pressure of profound socio-economic advances which took place there. The further development of this process paralleled the rapid proletarianization of black Americans. As early as 1969, 90 percent of Blacks belonged to various detachments of the nation's working class. By the 1980s, this figure had risen to 96 percent.

The proletarianization and urbanization of Blacks are two interconnected processes. The number of Afro-Americans in the overall population of America's largest cities has been growing year after year ever since the end of the Second World War. In 1970, black Americans made up 71 percent of Washington, D. C., the nation's capital, 54 percent of New York, 46 percent of Baltimore, 45 percent of New Orleans, 41 percent of Atlanta, 44 percent of Detroit, 34 percent of Philadelphia, 33 percent of Chicago. The number of Blacks in big cities (with a population of more than 2 million) is growing especially fast. In 1960, Blacks accounted for 20 percent of the population of such cities, and in 1970, 28 percent. The number of Blacks stayed at just as high a level in subsequent years. The great migrational surge of Afro-Americans into big cities is due to the fact that they expect to find work there. It is also important that the black population of large cities is better organized and can consequently fight racial discrimination more effectively.

The rapid growth of the cities has been giving rise to serious socio-economic and political problems. Comprising a substantial portion of the population of large cities and occupying the lowest rung in American society, black Americans are the first to come up against these problems and bear

the most costs resulting from rapid urbanization. The hectic development of the scientific and technological revolution and the mass migration of black Americans led to significant changes in the class and professional structure of Afro-Americans.

Up until the Second World War, most Blacks were employed in agriculture, in domestic service, or at unskilled jobs where brute physical strength was used. Only an inconsequential fraction of Blacks was used in certain branches of the manufacturing industry: wood-working, furniture-making, food, tobacco, and certain other industries. During the post-war period, a definite redistribution of the work force in various sectors of the economy took place resulting in an increase in the number of Blacks employed in manufacturing. As a rule, however, they were allowed into only those branches of the manufacturing industry where the pay was not high and which made abundant use of physical labor.

According to statistics for 1970, about 50 percent of the Negro working class was made up of industrial, construction, and transportation workers. As before, a large percentage of Blacks was employed in the area of service—26 percent. The agricultural proletariat accounted for 2.6 percent of employed Negroes, clerical workers, 13.2 percent, and retail, 2.1 percent. Nine percent of the employed black populace came from the intelligentsia, and not more than three percent were from the bourgeois class. Most of these, it should be noted, were small and middle business people employed in commerce, insurance, small-loans, and the area of services. Their market was principally black Americans. Less than one percent of black Americans belonged to the class of relatively large-scale capitalists.⁶ The great degree to which the US black population has been proletarianized is evidenced in the fact that Blacks, while making up 11 percent of the country's population, account for one-third of the workers in the leading sectors of industry.⁷

Because they are employed at low-paying positions, Blacks do not have at their disposal the opportunities necessary for obtaining either housing conditions, medical care, or education equal to those of Whites. Hiring discrimination is the primary basis for discrimination against Blacks in all other areas of life. Politically, the gains Blacks have made breaking into industrial production are of tremendous importance, as they precipitated the celerious development of the black liberation movement in the post-war period. As far

as the socio-economic consequences of this phenomenon are concerned, it must be stated that the transition from agricultural to industrial work did not lead to very much of an improvement in the material position of most Blacks.

The new generation of the black working class was and is the object of the most severe discrimination in the nation's industrial enterprises. In 1948, for example, 14.6 percent of white workers belonged to the category of foremen or skilled workers, whereas only 5.3 percent of colored workers did. By 1970, the persistent class struggle of coloreds and their white allies had managed to improve the situation somewhat for non-Whites: for Whites, the corresponding figure was 13.5 percent, and for colored Americans, 8.2 percent.

Blacks are discriminated against when they apply to work at engineering jobs, as managers, and at other high-paying positions. Percent-wise, the number of Afro-Americans working as domestic servants and unskilled workers is exceptionally high.

Trying to justify their discriminatory practices, employers generally claim, when hiring their workers, that they must be guided by the fact that most Blacks have considerably lower educational and professional training than Whites. Even official surveys refute such assertions. In 1969, for instance, the US Equal Employment Commission found that only in one-third of the cases lower educational level could be considered a reason for differences between coloreds and Whites in work done or the post filled, and two-thirds of all cases had to be attributed to discrimination. Even at present Blacks are in essence denied access to such high-paying areas in industry as missile production, electronic equipment production, et al. It is practically impossible for Blacks to become highly qualified specialists. In 1970, for example, of 295,000 physicians in the US, only 5,000 were black, less than 1.7 percent of the total.

The private enterprise principle frequently turns out to be completely insurmountable discrimination for Afro-Americans. In practice, the owner of a private business is free to hire whoever he likes. But what's more, contrary to federal laws, discrimination also flourishes in government agencies. At present, just as in the first post-war years, black employees of federal offices and agencies work primarily at low-paying jobs such as messengers, office help, etc. In the Manpower Report of the President in 1970, along with other factors such as lower educational level and lack of skills, it

was stated that "inadequate knowledge of better job opportunities and racial discrimination also account for the disparity in the employment of Negroes".⁸

Advocates of racial discrimination often claim that leaders of Negro organizations exaggerate the shortcomings associated with hiring practices so as to attract public attention to them and reach a solution which would benefit Blacks. The complete untenability of the matter is demonstrated by the fact that even official governmental commissions have found Afro-Americans working in production to be discriminated against. In particular, the Chairman of the US Equal Employment Commission stated that five years after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Commission found that, as before, employment discrimination was still prevalent. The same kind of situation persists even today. As has been stated earlier, hiring discrimination against Blacks leads to a sharp decline in their standard of living. All through US history Afro-Americans have received considerable less payment for their labor than Whites. For the past 30-40 years, the salary of Blacks has been about half that of Whites. During economic recessions, this difference goes up even more. When the US was experiencing its usual drop in production in late 1969, the salary of Blacks as compared to Whites' immediately took a considerable reduction. Incontrovertible figures from official statistics allow one to conclude that the average earnings of non-white Americans are considerably lower than those of Whites. In 1981, the average weekly salary of Afro-Americans was 54 dollars less than Whites made. Black males with higher education make less money than white males with high-school education. In 1977, the average income of a black family was only 57 percent that of a white family; in 1978, it was 59 percent, in 1979, 57 percent. When determining the material status of Afro-Americans one must also consider that the average Negro family consists of 3.9 persons, while the average white family, of only 2.8. Therefore, even with equal family incomes, each member of a Negro family gets 25 percent less than in a white family. One cannot get a complete idea of the living standard of Blacks without considering that, while they earn less than Whites, they must pay more for many goods than Whites. Youths who went around to various stores in the Harlem ghetto of New York in the late 1960s found that Blacks must pay 4-10 percent more for the same food than Whites. In subsequent years, this tendency was com-

pletely maintained and even got stronger. This is a typical example of brazen racial discrimination in the area of economics. One must bear in mind that white wholesalers use figureheads to control all the principal shopping areas in Negro ghettos in the largest US cities. According to data for the end of the 1960s, this discriminatory practice of establishing inflated prices in Negro ghettos brought representatives of businesses about 5 billion dollars in additional profits each year.

With the revolution in science and technology, the material well-being of most black families is largely determined by the amount of schooling and professional training they have been able to receive. The importance of this is going up and up, since the more science and technology progress, the more rapidly the demand for workers having sufficient schooling and professional training grows. The racial barriers confronting Blacks trying to obtain such schooling and professional training are so formidable that, as a rule, attempts to overcome them meet with failure. In black schools and colleges the quality of teaching is significantly lower than in corresponding white colleges. Even today, colleges for colored Americans receive considerably less funds than schools and colleges for white students. Blacks cannot advance to many schools and colleges either because of traditional discrimination or because of runaway tuition costs. Afro-Americans also run up against great difficulties in the system of professional education, which deprives them of the chance to improve qualifications and get higher-paying jobs. Official statistics show that black Americans do not have educational opportunities equal to those of Whites. The reason for segregated education is that the significant majority of Afro-Americans are not able to live in the same areas as Whites. In addition, school officials pursue discriminatory policies. It is worth noting that segregated education is constantly on the rise. In 1970, 52.5 percent of black children attended segregated schools; in 1978, 63 percent of black Americans attended schools where minorities comprised from 50 to 100 percent of the school body, and about 12 percent went to all-black schools. The more the revolution in science and technology evolves, the more the negative effects of colored Americans' educational lag will be felt. This applies first of all to black youth, who have no prospects for the future. Soviet historian I. A. Geyevsky writes that Blacks "are caught on a treadmill where from generation to generation it

is their lot to have a lower educational level, less skilled work, higher unemployment, and lower salaries than Whites".⁹ As far as unemployment is concerned, this is a real scourge for Afro-Americans, especially for black teenagers.

Millions of Blacks fled the South, but did not find solutions to their problems in the North, where the great majority of Afro-Americans sink to the social "bottom" of America. As in the southern states, social dynamite continues to steadily pile up here, inevitably creating the right conditions for new serious inter-racial disturbances. Racial discrimination in the North lowers the black worker to the level of a genuine outcast, the pariah of American society. That the great bulk of black laborers are aware they are being discriminated against and are as defiant as possible in their opposition causes keen anxiety in the US ruling circles. This is typical for the entire post-war period. The statement of black automobile workers in Detroit is an indicator of the Blacks' mood. The workers declared, in February 1969, as part of a protest against the firing of 26 black employees who were actively opposing racial discrimination, that the black worker, because of a pact between the management and union bosses, was reduced to the position of a super-exploited and super-oppressed beast of burden with less rights than a common cur.

The Negro problem has grown into a most complex socio-economic question since to solve it the process of pauperizing millions and millions of the country's largest ethnic group, about 30 million persons, must be overcome. Official American statistics attest to the complexity of the problem. They show that the proportion of poor people among Whites in 1970 was 10 percent, while among Blacks it was 34 percent. In the 1980s, the proportion of Afro-American poor has grown even more. In 1982, about 70 percent of families classified as poor in the cities were colored Americans.

The main obstacle in resolving the socio-economic aspects of the Negro problem are the interests of the nation's all-powerful monopolies. In 1980, the super-exploitation of black Americans gave the monopolies and the US government 70 billion dollars of super-profits. In the years which followed, these super-profits of monopoly capital have grown even more.

The pauperization of black Americans has rapidly increased since the Reagan administration took office. The new president has bet on the monstrous arms race. During the

election campaign, Reagan claimed that an increase in military expenditures would be an important boost to the country's economy and would help end the recession. In any event, the Republican presidential candidate made it clear that the arms race would have no negative effect on the living standard of workers. He was intentionally misinforming the voters. No one has ever been able to solve the problem of both guns and butter. The broad working masses always pay for the arms race by a lowering of their standard of living. Black Americans have felt the negative consequences of the arms race in that Reagan, from his very first day in office, began eliminating or making serious cuts in social programs designed to aid Americans who are less well-off. Since black workers' standard of living is considerably lower than white workers', Reagan's social policies have been especially hard on Afro-Americans.

America's most difficult and painful problem is mass unemployment, which deprives a person of the right to work and support himself and his family. The Black is the last to be hired and the first to be fired. This formula has become a law of US social life and has been particularly devastating under Reagan. In June 1982, the unemployment level for the colored population was already three times higher than the national average and had reached 20 percent.

The quintessential expression of the racist nature of Reaganomics is the swift rise in unemployment among black Americans, the first victims being teenage Afro-Americans. Official statistics put the unemployment level of black teenagers at 50.7 percent. Afro-American children also suffer severely from the consequences of unemployment. About 30 percent of black children live in families where neither parent works.

During President Reagan's tenure in office, black Americans have been sinking to the social bottom with particular rapidity. This applies to those black Americans who have work, too. The Black makes only 57 percent of the salary of the White. And there is nothing surprising about this if only six percent of black workers have a skill. The lot of the great majority of black Americans is unskilled, and hence, low-paying labor. Reagan's social policies have brought about a situation in the US where three times more Blacks than Whites live in poverty. After Reagan sharply cut back social programs, these people were left in an abysmal plight. In the USA, in 1983, 35 million people, or 15 percent of the

country's population, lived below the official poverty line; 60 percent of these were Blacks.

In health care, housing, education, and other areas the standard of living of black Americans has greatly deteriorated while the Reagan administration has been in office. The Mayor of New York decided to close a hospital in the center of the Negro ghetto of Harlem, where the mortality rate is the highest in the country and where there are already too few medical facilities. Colored Americans also suffer most from the housing crisis. Sixty-nine percent of urban families, classified as poor, in 1982 belonged to national minorities. The tragedy of millions of colored Americans who have fallen victim to Reaganomics is concealed in these meager statistics.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the anti-Negro economic policies of the Reagan administration are being supplemented with a genuine "counter-revolution" in the area of black Americans' civil rights. This was the term used by the London *Economist* to characterize Reagan's policies toward black Americans.

All resolutions hitting at racial discrimination in education, housing, and employment are subject to veto under the excuse that they fall under "states' rights". On this basis the Justice Department refused to eliminate racial discrimination in Chicago schools and did away with the busing of schoolchildren which earlier had been approved. A federal law is pending approval which would abolish the joint busing of black and white schoolchildren. The Justice Department has approved corresponding resolutions which have already been passed in a number of large cities: Houston (Texas), Seattle (Washington), and Los Angeles (California).

Several southern colleges have passed resolutions discriminating against black-skinned students. In January 1982, private schools discriminating against Blacks were exempted from paying taxes, something they had been trying to achieve without result for the previous 12 years. Reagan politely met the demands of the white racists. The Reagan administration also passed a law by which small and middle-sized private businesses which handle government contracts are no longer bound to guarantee even a trifling number of jobs to minorities.

In 1965, under considerable pressure from opponents of racial discrimination, a law was passed which to a certain extent limited the whims of racists trying to take away from

Blacks their voting rights in southern states. This law has been violated numerous times in the 1980s. The racist actions of the Reagan administration have forced even moderate black leaders to condemn Reagan's minorities policies. In June 1981, President Reagan appeared at the 72nd Convention of the NAACP. He said that federal aid programs for the poor must be eliminated. He tried to convince his audience that "black capitalism" would solve all colored Americans' problems, just as white capitalism, in his opinion, could solve the social problems of the entire country. Reagan's eloquence did not have the effect he anticipated. Even the Executive Secretary of the NAACP, Benjamin Hooks, loyal as he is to US ruling circles, declared that "to cut out these programs and not make sure black people are gainfully employed—that's the cruelest thing in history".¹⁰

Reagan's policies were sharply criticized at the NAACP's 73rd Convention held in Boston in July 1982. Referring to President Reagan, Hooks said, "We want you to move from rhetoric to reality", from "pious platitudes to positive action".¹¹ It was bluntly stated at the Convention that the time for action had come, that in the interim elections in November 1982, black voters should make their mistrust of Reagan and his party heard. Hooks stated that the 1982 elections would be a "referendum on Reaganomics led by the NAACP and the labor movement".¹² This was all the more dangerous a view for Reagan and the Republicans, since only seven percent of Blacks had voted for Reagan in the 1980 election. In the November 2, 1982 election, American voters found the Reagan administration's domestic and foreign policy guilty: the Republicans suffered a severe setback. For Reagan's party, this was not even a "zero" option, but a highly negative one. The 73rd NAACP Convention showed that this powerful black organization is gravitating nearer and nearer to the unions. Even conservative leaders in the AFL-CIO have been compelled to take account of the ever growing political weight of the organization and all other movements of black Americans. Glenn Watts, president of the Communications Workers of America, said at the NAACP's 73rd Convention that the labor movement and the NAACP are united by "common purpose". This representative of the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest union, called for a strengthening of the alliance between black Americans and organized labor.¹³ Black workers are particularly interested in such an alliance, as they are always the first victims of

economic recessions, and pay an especially high price for "social experiments" like Reaganomics, for foreign-policy adventures by the ruling circles, and for the arms race.

In the richest country in the world, even with the rise in productive forces and rapid increase in national income brought about in spite of over-production crises by the scientific and technological revolution, the living standard of black Americans is falling, and not only relatively, but absolutely. This is due to the fact that in the conditions of super-exploitation based on economic racism, the black people have come up against the country's most powerful and influential force—monopoly capital. This in turn creates the possibility of organizing a united anti-monopoly front of white and black workers. The successful development of the class struggle of American workers depends, in the final analysis, on the successful solution of this problem so vital to the overwhelming majority of the American people.

The struggle by American Blacks in the post-war period for their economic, political, and civil rights is proof that, by overcoming bitter resistance by reactionary forces, monopoly capital, the vestiges of racism in the sentiments of a certain segment of white workers, and the nationalism of leaders of some black organizations, Afro-Americans are gradually coming to realize the need for uniting the efforts of white and black workers in the struggle against monopoly capital.

The Rise of the Black Liberation Movement

Black Americans have been faced by different problems at different stages of their history. Until January 1, 1863, the main goal of Afro-Americans and their white allies was the abolition of slavery. During Reconstruction, in the post-Civil War period in the southern states, the problem arose for the former slaves and the radical Republicans of keeping the plantation owners from restoring slavery, if not de jure, then de facto. Ever since that time, black Americans and white opponents of racial discrimination have been faced with the task of liberating Blacks from various manifestations of racial discrimination and ensuring them rights equal to those of white Americans in all spheres of life. Considering these problems, one may with complete justification speak of a Negro liberation movement over the entire history of

the USA after the abolition of slavery. The activization of the Negro liberation movement has put the Negro question at the focus of the nation's domestic politics in the post-war period. The Program of the Communist Party USA says: "The struggle for Black liberation in the United States is today the central, most crucial issue before the entire working class and its allies."¹⁴

Many important domestic factors have made the sharp aggravation of the Negro problem and the feverish activization of the Negro liberation movement inevitable. The most important of these is the lingering discrimination against millions of Blacks in the United States. The fundamental change in the social structure of the active black population and the heady growth of the black proletariat have created a new alignment of class forces. By the end of World War II, the system of discrimination had been abolished or severely weakened in many labor unions. But it was not completely done away with. Thirteen unions of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and seven independent unions kept to their refusal to let black workers into their unions.

Great changes have taken place in the class composition of Afro-Americans over the post-war period. This leaves its imprint on the forms and methods of struggle by the opponents of racial discrimination and on the results of this struggle. The black bourgeoisie and intelligentsia have always played an important role at all stages in the history of black Americans in their struggle against racial discrimination. It is significant that the black bourgeoisie and intelligentsia continue to maintain leading positions in the oldest and most widespread organization of black Americans—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

However, another important tendency—the growing role of the black proletariat in the struggle for the social, political, and civil rights of all black Americans—has been steadily developing in the post-war period. The appearance and successful development of this tendency has been caused by the numerical growth of the proletariat in the composition of the active black population and by the qualitative increase of its role in the socio-political life of the USA on the whole. This is something completely new in the development of the Negro liberation movement which opens up great additional opportunities for it, since the working class was and still is the most revolutionary force in modern society. "The overwhelming majority of the Afro-American people are

working-class," notes the New Program of the Communist Party USA. "This class composition imparts important class content to the basically national character of the struggle. The working-class sector, made up of industrial workers in proportions greater than the general population, binds the national liberation cause of the Black people to that of the working class as a whole."¹⁵

The growth of class differentiation among black Americans, the acceleration in the process of polarization of class, political, and social forces throughout American society, and the impact of a number of other important internal and external political factors have all led to the steady growth of self-awareness of the broad masses of black Americans. And this is always equivalent to activizing the struggle for the rights of the corresponding class or population group. The liberating, anti-fascist nature of the Second World War, the active participation of black Americans in this war, the fierce resistance of monopoly capital and political reaction to demands to eliminate racial discrimination all helped strengthen the Negro liberation movement back in the first post-war years.

That US domestic and foreign policies became far more conservative after the end of World War II and that this conservatism became the dominant trend during the cold war also helped to stimulate black Americans in the struggle for their rights. The increase in conservatism and the increased activities by racists developed in parallel. US history shows that whenever political reaction increases, racial oppression increases at the same time. During the cold war, Blacks were among the first victims of the McCarthyites and other apostles of the American right. The defensive reaction of black Americans often grew into a mass movement against racial discrimination. There is always a link between domestic and foreign policies in any country, but the precise content of this link is determined by many important peculiarities in the political situation within the given country and by the overall international situation.

The revolutionary changes occurring in the post-war world were also a serious factor which improved the situation of Afro-Americans and made the struggle for their rights inevitable. The defeat of nazi Germany and militarist Japan was a powerful stimulus for the turbulent development of the national liberation movement. Huge colonial empires which had been whittled away by years of struggle on the part

of hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples and undermined by the explosive development of the world revolutionary process, collapsed under the powerful pressure of the liberation movement which was actively supported by the socialist countries and progressive forces in capitalist countries. The first socialist state to appear in the Americas was Cuba, located in the direct vicinity of the United States. The successful Cuban Revolution made a great impact on the liberation struggle of Afro-Americans in the USA, since Cuba had (and has) a large black population and the successful resolution of the racial issue on the Isle of Freedom got much response in the United States.

Dozens of sovereign and independent countries emerged from the ruins of imperialism's colonial system. In 1960 alone, the year which went down in history as Africa Year, 17 independent countries appeared on the Black Continent. Peoples in countries with a low level of economic and cultural development are taking their fate into their own hands and are building a new life. At the same time, the 30 million Blacks in the most advanced capitalist power in the world are forced to fight for elementary human rights. This is a severe condemnation of the entire imperialist system. That Afro-Americans enjoy no rights and that for over 200 years ruling circles in the US have been unable to radically resolve the problem of Blacks, attests to the historical impotence of American capitalism.

The emergence of the world socialist system has had a great impact on the liberation movement of Afro-Americans. This system is the prototype of a future brotherhood of peoples in all countries of the world who will live together regardless of race, nation, or religion. It is with good reason that there is interest in the US as to how the national question has been solved in the USSR, that unique phenomenon in world history which convincingly proves the vital force and advantage of socialism. W. E. B. DuBois wrote in 1945: "The record of Soviet Russia in the matter of racial tolerance has been extraordinary... It has become today a community of two hundred, more or less, diverse groups of people ... bound together in an extraordinary unity of effort and enthusiasm for its ideal."¹⁸

When set against the universal historical achievements of socialism in resolving racial and national problems and the successful development of the national liberation movement of colonial and dependent nations, the US racial problem

looks to be a monstrous anachronism. This is also obvious to the country's ruling circles, who are seriously concerned about how unpleasant an impression traditional US racial intolerance is making on other nations. Never before has the world known such powerful revolutionary shocks whose fire is giving birth to dozens of new, free countries all over the former colonial and dependent world. The peoples of these countries are particularly intolerant of the slightest evidence of racial or national oppression. Never before has the USA conducted so aggressive a foreign policy as in the post-war period. American expansionists have concluded that the post-World War II period is their hour and that, as certain circles in the US are fond of stressing, history has placed a special responsibility on the United States to "lead the world".

What has the United States been able to give the world? The animal hatred of racists toward Afro-Americans. Slums and racial violence. Racial intolerance in such watersheds of racism as Little Rock, Birmingham, and many other cities of the US South. The cultural degradation of hundreds of thousands of Blacks in the era of the scientific and technological revolution.

US leaders, under pressure from the growing movement of Afro-Americans and taking into consideration international public opinion, have been compelled to pass a number of resolutions in order to eliminate at least the most reeking sores of racism. On February 2, 1948, President Truman sent a special civil rights message to Congress requesting that it pass certain laws making the most glaring acts of racial intolerance illegal. After a fierce battle within the Democratic Party, Truman was compelled to issue two executive orders on the race question. One concerned federal control over fair employment practices, and the other, over equal treatment and opportunities within the armed forces. Truman's orders gave certain practical results. Racial segregation was gradually weakened in the army and by 1953 there remained in the US armed forces only 88 small black units. In the US troops in Western Europe, 83 percent of all Afro-American soldiers served in integrated units. In Japan and countries of the Pacific, all American military units were completely integrated. For all this, however, the problem of discrimination in the armed forces was still far from its radical solution. During Eisenhower's second election campaign in 1956, the Democrats, trying to chip away at the positions

of the Republican Presidential candidate, said that he must bear responsibility for the fact of segregation in the US armed forces. Eisenhower disputed this accusation in November 1956, and claimed that he had been the first commander in control of integrated military units. He further emphasized that as of 1953, the Republican government had often dealt with racial discrimination in the armed forces and that the Defense Department had taken measures to resolve the problems there. It must be stressed, however, that these measures gave no effective results. Neither Republican nor Democratic governments could get close to a radical solution of the discrimination problem in the armed forces at any time in the post-war period. This is entirely natural, too, since racial discrimination in the armed forces is an integral part of the general problem of inter-racial relations in American society. As long as all racial issues throughout the country remain unsolved, no fundamental solution to race problems in the armed forces can be spoken of.

The election campaign played an important part in the civil rights issue. Truman quickly wasted the political capital of the Democratic Party built up by the flexible, far-sighted policies of Roosevelt. The Truman administration had some serious political liabilities coming into the 1948 election campaign. The position of the Democrats and the President himself was so shaky that politicians everywhere were predicting Truman's inevitable defeat in the election. Some effective, though not substantive, gestures toward Afro-Americans considerably improved the Democrats' plight, and this was one factor which helped Truman to win a rather surprising victory. In the 1952 election campaign, the problem of Blacks played a somewhat lesser role than it had in the 1948 election. General Eisenhower, the Republicans' popular candidate for the White House, had no special need to maneuver on the race question in order to receive additional votes from Afro-Americans. It is significant, though, that on November 2, 1952, on the very eve of the election, Eisenhower gave a short summary of the things he was promising to enact should he be elected President. The Republican candidate gave top priority to serving the interests of all Americans regardless of race. This fact was persuasive evidence that even a Presidential candidate as popular as Eisenhower could not disregard the great importance of the Negro problem.

The organizers and directors of Eisenhower's election campaign, incomparably more astute than Eisenhower in poli-

tics, did all they could to underscore the necessity for their candidate to give considerable attention to the Negro question in the course of the election campaign. Congressman Adam Clayton Powell wrote Eisenhower that it is necessary to "immediately instruct Senator Lodge [Eisenhower's campaign director—*R.I.*] to employ on your staff a Negro".¹⁷ During the campaign, the Republican Party was rather open in betting that it could get the votes of white racists in the South. In a speech in Atlanta in September 1952, Eisenhower called southern racists "free Americans" whom Democratic Party bosses feared.

The rather open turn to the right by the Republicans on racial questions gave Truman the opportunity to come out with a statement that Eisenhower and the Republicans adhered to the philosophy of racial supremacy developed by the nazis. But it must be pointed out that the platform of the Democrats differed little from the platform of their political rivals.

The war hero Eisenhower settled into the White House with no political burdens. He gave Blacks no widely heralded promises during the campaign and thus did not have to pay off political dividends. The new President was planning on serving out his term in the White House without undertaking any kind of important actions on such an intricate issue as race relations. But Eisenhower was not able to do this, as it was during his eight-year tenure in the White House that the first serious racial conflicts came up since the end of the war, and which were in subsequent years to cause a genuine chain reaction of riots by Afro-Americans in defense of their rights. The 1954 Supreme Court decision on desegregation of the schools was an important action in inter-racial relations at this time. This question had been long in need of resolution, since there had been nearly 100 percent segregated schools in the South for the nearly 100 years that had passed since Reconstruction, a fact that elicited sharp protests from Blacks. For example, in the eleven states of the former slave Confederacy, only 2.1 percent of black children attended white schools in 1954. The crux of the matter was not only that school segregation was demeaning to the human dignity of Afro-Americans. It must also be borne in mind that the conditions in black schools were far worse than those in white schools. Without getting the necessary educational minimum in childhood, Afro-Americans could not count on getting a good job after completing their education.

Objectively, the Supreme Court's decision was a progressive measure aimed against one of racism's most glaring manifestations. This type of decision was an important link in the chain of measures designed to keep down by way of reform the rising wave of revolutionary actions by the black people. The Supreme Court's decision was made in the middle of the 1950s, right when the well-organized mass movement of Blacks for their civil rights had begun.

Racists were most hostile to the Supreme Court's decision on school desegregation in the South. They let loose a hail of censure at Eisenhower, even though he had in no way shown any initiative in getting the Court to reach its decision. A South Carolina employer who had voted for Eisenhower wrote him on October 5, 1954 that Eisenhower had promised Southerners he would respect states' rights, but instead, they received orders of executive power. Losing all sense of measure, the letter-writer emphasized that the idea of school desegregation could have been thought up "only in Russia" and that it had nothing in common with Americanism.

The racists decided to give open battle to the Blacks and all opponents of racial discrimination in connection with the Supreme Court's decision. On February 10, 1956, eight Congressmen wrote President Eisenhower that open non-compliance with the Supreme Court's decision was not just a hypothetical danger—several states had already declared that they were not going to take a single step toward integrating their schools as the Court's decision mandated. Trying to discredit the Court's decision, the racists blackmailed the White House with the threat of communism which allegedly emanated from these decisions. On May 13, 1957, a Georgia legislator wrote Eisenhower: "Why should not the Communists celebrate the decision? Who else could benefit more from it than they?"¹⁸ Another of Eisenhower's correspondents, a court clerk from Alabama, also saw "communist machinations" in the Court's decision. He wrote the President on September 12, 1957: "What fools we were to let Communist and left-wing pressure get us into this terrible mess, and, without question in my mind, they lurk prominently in the shadows."¹⁹

Even Eisenhower's wait-and-see tactics on the school desegregation issue in the South drew vehement protests from the racists. Under pressure from the progressive public and fearing that the excesses by racists in Little Rock, Arkan-

sas, might provoke serious race riots, Eisenhower ordered federal troops into Arkansas to avert carnage. This caused a chain reaction of numerous protests by racists throughout the South. On January 25, 1958, for instance, the State Democratic Executive Committee of Alabama unanimously adopted a resolution which spoke of "the illegal action of the President of the United States in sending federal troops into the sovereign State of Arkansas, forcing white and colored children at bayonet point to go to school together".²⁰ Alabama Democrats believed Eisenhower's action to have "done great damage to the welfare of both races, and set back for a generation or more the friendly relations that has been established between the races".²¹ The Alabama Democratic Executive Committee, in speaking of the "friendly relations" between Whites and Blacks in the South, was impudently advertizing the ways of Alabama. The same resolution further said: "The negro in the South, through peaceful and friendly segregation of the races, during the past 80 years has realized history making progress unequalled by his race anywhere."²²

The racists managed to keep most schools in the South segregated. They did all they could to discredit those few schools where segregation was eliminated, going so far as to use the foulest slander against black pupils. A racist bloc in the nation's highest legislative organ staunchly condemned school desegregation in the South. Racist senators and congressmen were the most active opponents of the Supreme Court's decision. In a letter to President Eisenhower, Herman Talmadge, the Senator from Georgia, called the school desegregation decision "one of the greatest tragedies to befall our nation in modern times".²³

The Supreme Court's school desegregation decision was not implemented. Virtually nothing changed in the southern states. The severest possible segregation was maintained in the schools. The racists unleashed a violent campaign protesting the decision first of all for "prophylactic purposes". They wanted to avoid setting an undesirable precedent, and strove to avert the slightest infringement on "states' rights" and the system of segregation which reigned in the South.

Opponents of racial segregation strongly criticized the federal government's indecisive position on the school desegregation issue. One of the many protest letters addressed to President Eisenhower said, "The situation is far more serious than many of us realize, and may get out-of-hand any

day now." The writer meant the situation in Arkansas, where racists were challenging the federal government. He went on to say, "People are resorting to vandalism and crimes of a more serious nature because they are confident that their governor will support their stand one hundred percent."

School bombings, arson, and the beating of black pupils became a common occurrence in the South. The above letter-writer continued: "We now realize what effect such incidents have upon US foreign policy... I've never heard of a school being bombed in any other country before, not even in times of war."²⁴

On November 16, 1958, a group belonging to the National Council of Negro Women, a conservative organization bringing together 850,000 well-to-do black women, declared that discrimination against Blacks in the US "was difficult if not impossible for non-Americans to understand".²⁵

The half-hearted measures which the Eisenhower government limited itself to only encouraged the racists to new acts of ruthless terror against Afro-Americans and their white allies. The racists decided to make a stand against the federal government on the school desegregation question. On September 4, 1957, Arkansas Governor Orville Faubus ordered the state's National Guard in Little Rock to block black children from entering white schools. This put Washington in quite a delicate position, since the racists were flouting the federal government. After a good while had passed, the federal government overcame its agonizing hesitation and finally sent troops into Little Rock to restore order in the city. Violence against Blacks ceased, but the Supreme Court's decision on school desegregation was not carried out in a single state. In 1960, only 0.1 percent of black schoolchildren attended integrated schools in Arkansas. In Tennessee, one percent of Blacks went to integrated schools; in Texas, 0.12 percent; and in Virginia, 0.1 percent. In six southern states not a single black child entered a white school. Not even the more than 10,000 soldiers sent by the President to Little Rock could guarantee black children the right to education together with white children. It became increasingly obvious that the time had come for a firm show of force toward the high-handed champions of white supremacy.

Letters to the White House indicated that opponents of racial discrimination thought the time past for mere remonstrances directed at southern racists, that the federal government should step in and use force. One such letter, dated

January 7, 1956, said: "Segregation and discrimination are crimes equal in guilt as murder and kidnapping." The writer, Arthur G. Price, called for President Eisenhower to take resolute action against "The White Citizens Councils", which he termed "a fascist organization". The letter emphasized that the mistakes of history should not be repeated, and that terror must be used against the southern reactionaries: "All our presidents have hesitated to do [this—*R. I.*], including Lincoln who by far seemed to have more insight into these questions." The writer concluded that taking firm, repressive measures against the racists in the South was "the key to the future path" of America and would decide whether America would take the path of "fascism or democracy".²⁶

The policies of the Republican government did much to encourage the violent excesses of the southern racists. In particular, Eisenhower frankly stated that he was a firm adherent of "states' rights". On October 29, 1956, while running for his second term in office, Eisenhower announced at the height of the campaign in one of his speeches in the South that matters relating to the equality of American citizens should be resolved as much as possible at the local and state level. In practice, this meant that all race-relation questions would be passed to the racists who reigned supreme in the South.

Progressive forces in the nation made use of the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision to ignite their struggle against all manifestations of racism. The well-known black leader A. Philip Randolph wrote Eisenhower on August 1, 1958: "The integration of schools has become a crucial and symbolic effort which affects all other aspects of the civil rights struggle."²⁷ Reflecting the general opinion of most discrimination opponents, Randolph insisted that the school desegregation movement was "not a Negro problem but an American problem".

The Negro Church took an active part in the struggle over school desegregation. Presbyterian Church leaders declared in 1954 on behalf of 3 million of their brethren that the fight over school integration signified that "a crucial hour for race relations in our country has arrived". They further said they were firmly convinced that those fighting for an end to discrimination would succeed in the long run. "Nor can the power of the Western nations today," the leaders continued, "prevent Asian and African peoples from attain-

ing national freedom. And no measures can finally stop the American Negro from attaining his rightful place in our democracy. Racial integration in our land is inevitable."²⁸

The fierce battle over school desegregation brought the attention of the whole country as well as international opinion to the problem of discrimination against Blacks. On December 2, 1955, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP Roy Wilkins wrote the White House that many in the South had gotten the impression that "the Federal Government either doesn't choose or does not dare to express itself in condemnation of the types of oppression now being visited upon great numbers of non-white citizens".²⁹

School segregation was only one of the manifestations of the racial discrimination which pervaded all spheres of American society, especially in the southern states, where anti-Negro terror was raging. It was learned in June 1959 that four Whites raped a black student in Florida, that Afro-Americans were beaten up for voting, and that numerous other acts of terror were taken against coloreds. On March 25, 1960, Edward Brewster, a white professor from Memphis, Tennessee, wrote Eisenhower of the mass arrests of black students in Memphis for attempting to use segregated libraries and museums, about black students losing their temporary jobs for participating in the struggle against racial discrimination, and about the terror against Whites supporting Afro-Americans. The letter-writer concluded that unless urgent measures were taken, "much bitter fruit may well result" in future. He also wrote: "There exists a desperate present need to save the people of Memphis from themselves."³⁰

The US ruling circles were alarmed most of all at the Blacks' determined and uncompromising struggle in defense of their rights. Mass demonstrations by black and white opponents of racial discrimination caused US ruling circles particular fear. A mass demonstration against racial discrimination was planned in Washington on the eve of the third anniversary of the Supreme Court's school-desegregation decision. In connection with this, a memorandum from Max Rabb to Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's closest aide, said: "The meeting was one that held considerable danger for the Administration because Martin Luther King and some others had planned to urge the march on Washington."³¹ A memorandum of October 25, 1958 from G. Butler to J. Seidenberg said that on October 25, 1958 more than

10,000 opponents of racial discrimination from eight states and the District of Columbia took part in a demonstration along the streets of the capital to the Lincoln Memorial. There was concern in official circles that the wife of the well-known black leader Martin Luther King, who spoke at the behest of her husband at the demonstration, called for the demonstrators to take decisive actions to protect the rights of Blacks. "The future," she said, "belongs to those who walk toward freedom."³²

Eisenhower categorically refused to give an audience to the youth representatives participating in the demonstration. This elicited numerous protests from youth organizations around the country. One protest letter to the President, dated October 27, 1958, said that racial conflicts lead to the triumph of the philosophy of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".³³ Leaders of youth organizations, severely condemning Eisenhower's refusal to meet with youth representatives, stressed that the President was rejecting an exchange of opinions on the US's most urgent problem—the Negro question. On November 28, 1958, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Baptist Student Movement of Colorado wrote Eisenhower: "We have tried to understand how playing golf is more important than hearing what 10,000 students have to say on this critical race issue. We wonder what we have to do to make our voice heard, and to show that we are concerned with more than rock 'n' roll."³⁴

The stormy reaction by the enemies of discrimination to what was going on in the South in connection with school desegregation attested to a rise in the activity of white opponents of racism, as well as black.

New forms of struggle by Blacks against racial intolerance have been emerging in the post-war period. On December 5, 1955, a boycott of segregated buses was begun in Montgomery, Alabama. In scorching sun and pouring rain, enduring a hail of derision and insults from local racists, paying no mind to the terror, threats, and provocations of authorities and Ku Klux Klansmen, 50,000 black residents of the city went everywhere on foot for 381 days rather than use segregated transportation. The racists gave in and segregation on local transportation was banned. The boycott was led by a 27-year-old Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, whose name became known around the country because of what happened in Montgomery. The events rocked the black population in many of the South's cities. In many

southern states, public transportation was boycotted, as were segregated stores, and other public places. Blacks came out in droves in defense of their rights. This was a qualitatively new stage in the Negro movement which had been readied by deep-reaching socio-economic advances in the South and by the entire Negro movement which had gone before.

Of exceptional importance was the fact that, for the first time since Reconstruction, the southern states became the arena of the mass Negro movement. The Montgomery boycott proved that Blacks could fight and win in the very heart of the South, the citadel of racism. From now on the whole country, not just the North, would become the stage for mass action against racial discrimination.

The great surge in the Negro movement left its imprint on the 1956 election campaign. Four years of the Republicans being in power showed that Eisenhower's government was going to have to reconsider its policies toward Blacks if the Republicans wanted to win the election. The Republican platform took Negro interests into account to a greater extent than did the Democratic. This made a difference in the election battle and was one of the important reasons for Eisenhower's convincing victory in the election. The Republican candidate was re-elected by the huge plurality of 9.6 million votes.

The Montgomery boycott was heard all over both the South and the North. It became apparent that this was only the beginning of a new wave in the struggle against racial segregation and discrimination. Trying to head off race riots, the Republican administration showed legislative initiative and got a law on civil rights passed in 1957. The law's most important feature was the Attorney General's right to sue in district court any persons violating voting rights. Events demonstrated, however, that the 1957 law was a pathetic attempt to impede the powerful surge in the black liberation movement by using legislative semi-measures and to channel the movement into a more reformist stance on problems of vital urgency to Blacks. Negro opinion was highly negative on passage of the civil rights law.

The White House kept careful track of how black leaders and the broad masses of black Americans reacted to the civil rights legislation. A memorandum of July 12, 1957 from Frederic Morrow to Sherman Adams said: "Negro

citizens are alarmed over reports that the Administration will 'soften' the requirements of the Administration bill on Civil Rights before Congress." The memorandum stated that the vast majority of black leaders were disappointed by the more than modest results of the bill. It went on to say: "In the last few days the talk of Administration capitulation to the South has resulted in a complete turnabout in feeling and attitude by Negro leadership." The Administration was worried most of all about what effect the civil rights legislation would have on black voters. The state and Congressional elections of 1958 were nearing, and leadership in the federal government was concerned about the rise in anti-Republican sentiments among broad masses of the black people. The memorandum cited above also reflects this worry: "As it stands now we are not only threatened with loss of this high moral position, but also with possible loss of the legislation and thousands of potential votes."³⁵ There were very solid reasons for such a pessimistic evaluation of law's consequences. Many leaders of the Negro movement publicly condemned the federal government's legislative initiative. On September 16, 1958 the White House received telegrams and protest letters on the Civil Rights Bill. Reverend W. H. Jernagin, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Negro organization the National Fraternal Council, appraised the 1957 Bill on Civil Rights in the following manner: "Personally I would rather have no bill passed at this Congress than the one passed by the Senate."³⁶ Organized black workers were adamantly against the bill. Philip Randolph appealed to President Eisenhower, in the name of the officials and members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, urging a veto of the Civil Rights Bill. He said that it was worse than no bill at all.³⁷

The entire course of post-war US history has attested to the rapid increase of the Negro problem's role in the country's life. Even in the first post-war years it had become apparent that this was in no way just a problem of the Blacks. The struggle of the black people against racial discrimination touched upon the vital interests of the entire American people. Philip Randolph, a veteran of the Negro movement, told President Eisenhower that racial discrimination "is not a Negro problem but an American problem ... in the eyes of the world, and in the hearts of millions of Americans, the problem we have discussed is the barometer of American democracy".³⁸ The readings on

this barometer were evidence of the terribly low level of American democracy and of the rapid approach of a social maelstrom which would shake the very foundations of American society.

American Communists pointed out the national nature of the Negro question in the US and the direct link between the Negro movement and the struggle for the country's democratization. The Main Political Resolution passed at the Communist Party's 16th National Convention in 1957 said that just as the abolition of slavery in the South a century before had been necessary for our progress, the elimination now of racial discrimination, most common in the southern states, was the condition necessary for democratic progress in the USA. All US history to that point proved the correctness of this appraisal of the place of the Negro problem in the life of the country. The self-awareness of the black people and their interest in politics grew in proportion to the activization of the Negro movement, which, in particular, was expressed in the number of black voters who went to the polls.

Martin Luther King, leader of the Negro movement, wrote Vice-President Richard Nixon on August 30, 1957: "More and more the Negro vote is becoming a decisive factor in national politics."³⁹ This made itself felt on the political strategy and tactics of both the Republicans and Democrats.

On the whole, the Democrats pursued a more active policy in race relations. The passive, wait-and-see tactics of the Republican administration encouraged the racists to the offensive. Like poisonous mushrooms, White Citizens' Councils grew in the South. They coordinated the efforts of racists against the timid attempts by the federal authorities to get rid of the more glaring facts of racial intolerance. The dimensions of these organizations' activities are evidenced by the fact that by 1957, the number of members of White Citizens' Councils had reached 300,000. The federal government's policy of virtual non-interference in racial disorders in the South helped urge racists on to acts of open terror. A black activist in the local NAACP chapter was murdered in Georgia in February 1956. Seven Afro-Americans fell victim to terror in Mississippi in a two-year period. Some 530 terrorist acts took place in the South from 1955-1958, 29 ending fatally. And once again, none of the murderers of Blacks was brought to trial.

Racists, including anti-Negro bourgeois historians, explain the savage anti-Negro terror by an age-old and insurmountable hostility between Whites and Blacks. They consider the restoration of normal relations between Afro-Americans and Whites to be a hopeless and even harmful dream. As one champion of racial segregation wrote to the White House, to throw the races together down here "is just like ordering the Jews and the Arabs to associate together".⁴⁰ Artificially inculcated racial prejudice is deeply imbedded in the consciousness of many white Americans. According to survey data from the Harris Institute, 88 percent of Whites do not want Afro-Americans for neighbors. Eighty percent of those Whites polled do not want to see their near relatives getting married to black-skinned citizens of the USA.

Without denying that racial prejudice is deeply rooted in the US, especially in the South, it must be stressed that racism has been and still is encouraged in every way possible by monopolistic circles making enormous profits of the super-exploitation of Blacks.

The mass migration of the black population during and after World War II and the celerious growth of the black proletariat make us wonder about the status of black workers and their relations with white workers.

The Working Class and Afro-Americans

Numerous studies of the black proletariat were made in the 1950s and 1960s in the US. Several of them had been conducted by industrial corporations and were clearly practical in nature, owing to which they gave a fairly objective picture of the situation of Blacks and the problems connected with the growing role of black workers in industrial production. One of the studies, *Employment of the Negro in American Industry*,⁴¹ which was favorably received by many corporation executives, labor union leaders, politicians, and others, made a thorough investigation of the whole set of problems of employing Blacks in industry. The author found this work in the "Dwight D. Eisenhower Library" in Abilene, Kansas, a rich depository of archival materials. The study makes an in-depth analysis of a number of the most complex problems relating to the status of black workers and their struggle for their rights. The

work notes that after the Second World War 15 states, most with industrialized economies, passed laws prohibiting hiring discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin. More than 30 municipalities in other states passed similar statutes.

These statutes, however, in no way meant that Afro-Americans were no longer discriminated against in industry. As before, Blacks were the last to be hired and the first to be fired, and this was especially true during the frequent economic recessions.

The educational, and for that reason, professional background of black workers was substantially lower than that of their white work-mates and hence the Afro-American employed at a skilled job was rather a rare sight. As the study pointed out, this meant that using Blacks only at low-paying jobs was very common after the war. The study's authors saw the reasons for employing a limited number of Afro-Americans at skilled jobs as the following:

1. For a long period of time, Blacks have not been allowed into many labor unions. This has deprived them of the opportunity of adding to their production background a necessary condition for getting a skilled job (union members were given privileges upon enhancing their professional background).

2. As a rule, black workers are not able to improve their skills and do not take advantage of the opportunity granted to them by their employers to get professional training because considerable time is needed to do so. (The situation has not changed in subsequent years.)

3. For these reasons, black workers prefer to sell their labor power to whomever will pay them more and do not look for jobs where they can advance.

In addition to the above reasons, one must add the traditionally low educational level of black workers, which prevents them from getting jobs requiring significant educational or professional background. It must also be borne in mind that, all other things being equal, employers sometimes will hire white workers first so as to split workers along racial lines and prevent the creation of a united front of workers.

By discriminating against black workers, employers get a direct and quite sizeable material advantage. In addition, they try as best they can to disguise that fact that because Afro-Americans are discriminated against, white workers

are compelled to compete with low-paid black workers and pay very dearly for this: employers lower the salaries of white workers, too.

The well-known American Marxist economist Victor Perlo estimated in 1969 that in the southern states alone the families of white workers lost about 15 billion dollars annually as a result of economic discrimination against black workers. The situation in other parts of the country is similar. According to Victor Perlo's estimates, on the whole, white workers around the country are paid many tens of billions of dollars less than they should be because of the super-exploitation of Blacks.

The realities of modern America provide numerous proofs of the tenet formulated by Lenin that white workers themselves suffer because black-skinned Americans are discriminated against.⁴² Lenin insisted that the Negro question is a most important component in the struggle of the entire American proletariat for its class interests. In his writings and practical activities, Lenin shows the proletariat's persistent need to fight all manifestations of separatism and national limitations of the working class. Underscoring that the American people have strong revolutionary traditions, Lenin pointed to specific ways of bringing the working class together in a united, international force.

Progressive circles in the American workers' movement make abundant use of facts showing that discrimination against Blacks hits at the interests of Whites. They use them to elucidate the state of affairs to white workers and to combine the efforts of white and black workers in the struggle against their common enemy—monopoly capital.

The practice of discriminating against Blacks in industry is highly common in all parts of the US. Even the authors of the *Employment of the Negro in American Industry* admitted this in a somewhat veiled form. They wrote that some employers pointed out that hiring Blacks does not always help create good relations between white and black workers. In a number of fields, Afro-Americans have traditionally been allowed to do only a certain kind of work. The authors concluded, admitting the hiring practices which discriminate against Blacks, that frequently the right to be inspectors or controllers of work that has been done is reserved for Whites alone. The study bluntly stated that an unwritten rule was followed in this instance which did not allow for a Black to control the work of a White.

In the stubborn class battles the class solidarity of white and black workers has been gradually growing in the post-war period. Certain progress has already been made on this road, but it is beyond dispute that deeply-rooted racial prejudice and the well-honed tactics of employers and right-wing labor-union bosses in splitting the united front of workers leads to the existence of rather strong anti-Negro sentiments among a certain part of white workers.

Only the Communist Party has been able to correctly explain the problem of consolidating white and black workers and to work out practical ways of solving it.⁴³ At the 22nd National Convention of the Communist Party USA, held in 1979, great attention was devoted to the issue of consolidating white and colored workers. The Main Political Resolution adopted at the Convention said:

"When relationships are correctly placed, the working-class movement and the racially and nationally oppressed communities can be a source of great strength to each other... The workers who are victims of racial and national oppression add to the working class an experience and a tradition of great militancy. Because of their struggles against racial oppression they bring into the working class a sharper and deeper sense of unity and oneness. This is an important contribution to the working class as a whole."⁴⁴

Anti-Negro sentiments among a certain part of white workers are real and cannot be ignored. In defining the reasons that a certain portion of white workers are set against Blacks, the authors of the above-cited study wrote that white workers are opposed to hiring Blacks for the following reasons. They may consider the hiring of Afro-Americans a factor damaging to their position at work. They may regard the hiring of a Black as a potential threat to their status and for that reason as squeezing their economic interests. The anti-Negro sentiments of white workers have promoted racial discrimination against a goodly segment of the nation's working class. The black working class has been growing swiftly in the post-war period. While no more than 21 percent of employed Blacks belonged to the category of industrial workers in 1940, in 1960, 36.7 percent of them were employed in the most important branches of industry. In the 1960s, Blacks made up 25 percent of all unskilled laborers employed in industry. According to 1960 census, Blacks comprised 30-35 percent of all workers in the chemical industry, dockers, lumberjacks, and meat-industry

workers. They made up 25-30 percent of construction and automobile workers. In the steel mills, textile and garment industries, no fewer than 20-25 percent of all workers were black. In the years that followed, the percentage of black workers in the leading branches of American industry remained, as pointed out above, at just as high a level.

These statistics are evidence that discrimination against Afro-Americans in industry really does affect the interests of a substantial portion of the US working class. This discrimination is evidence that racism has become very common in the United States. Gus Hall, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, wrote: "It is the most persistent and penetrating of all ideological concepts. It is the moving force behind actions all the way from a sickening paternalism to the actions of the lynch mob."⁴⁵

Even a certain segment of white workers has been poisoned by racism. It is noteworthy that during election campaigns a certain portion of white workers in southern states supports racists.

Racism contradicts the fundamental, most vital interests of the working class, of all workers, and nevertheless, millions upon millions of the American people even today are still stricken by deeply-rooted racial prejudice. Gus Hall has written: "We read stories of witchcraft in New England at an early period in our history, but is not the witchcraft of racism more fantastic, taking possession of the minds of millions of otherwise sane Americans?"⁴⁶ Overcoming racism among white workers is one of the most important tasks of American progressive forces favoring the creation of a united anti-monopolistic front of workers. The National Chairman of the CP USA, Henry Winston, an outstanding theoretician and fighter of the anti-racist movement, has written with complete justification: "The main obstacle to Black and White unity against the common enemy is the influence of racism on white workers."⁴⁷

Union membership gives the American worker a whole string of important economic advantages. It is entirely natural that black workers have been carrying on a lengthy and stubborn struggle to get the same union rights as white workers. Even today this matter is a long way from its complete resolution. A number of labor unions continue to discriminate against Blacks, which creates serious problems for the Blacks to get into the unions. *Employment of the Negro in American Industry* says in this regard that the

practice of turning Blacks away from the unions has not only impeded employment of black labor at skilled jobs, it has kept Afro-Americans from perfecting their production skills, without which they cannot hold onto a skilled job. A vicious circle results: Negro children attend black schools and acquire far less knowledge than white youth, making it harder for Blacks to get skilled and hence well-paying work.

There were altogether about two million black workers in US labor unions at the beginning of the 1970s. When you consider that 90 percent of Blacks who hire themselves out are blue-collar workers, this is a small number. In many unions, Afro-Americans still do not have rights equal to those of white workers. And while Blacks may be allowed into these unions, they are still segregated. Therefore they create their own organizations within them. Discrimination is quite common in electricians' unions, unions of train firemen and engineers, of railroad conductors, telegraph operators, mechanics, etc.

The labor union bureaucracy, in alliance with monopoly capital, actively supports discrimination against black workers. George Meany, for many years the leader of the AFL-CIO, the most prominent association of labor unions in the United States, showed himself to be a staunch racist (little has changed within the AFL-CIO even since its leadership changed hands). When racists from the construction-workers' union in Pittsburgh refused to allow Blacks to do skilled labor or grant young black workers equal rights with Whites to learn skilled professions, Meany was behind them all the way. He came out with crude attacks on Negro organizations in Pittsburgh. Relying on the support of the AFL-CIO leadership, a convention of the construction-workers' union adopted a statute in September 1969 limiting the rights of black workers. In the early 1970s, the AFL-CIO had over 150 segregated Negro labor union organizations.

The fight by black Americans for their union rights has had results. At the end of the 1970s, about 3 million Blacks were members in nearly all the country's important labor unions. Black workers comprised "20 percent or more of Auto, Steel, Meat Cutters, Garment, Men's Clothing, Building Service, Hospital, Transit, Laundry, State, County and Municipal, Letter Carriers, Postal Clerks, Teachers, and many others".⁴⁸ The growth of black membership in labor

unions has led to their increased part in the struggle for union democracy. For example, Afro-Americans played an important role in 1972 in the complete changing of the old and reactionary leadership of the mine-workers' union. The joint efforts of white and black members of the steel-workers' union made it possible to gain important victories against reactionary union bureaucrats. In the mid-1970s, black and white union members in the textile industry likewise managed to make certain progress in the struggle for their rights.⁴⁹

Afro-Americans face discrimination when union leaders are elected. They comprise a third of the membership of the auto-workers' union, about a fourth of all union steelworkers, and a third of the garment-workers' union, and yet only one Black was elected to the board of the auto-workers' union and none to the boards of the other two unions. All three of these unions are among the largest in the US. A Black within the AFL-CIO leadership is quite a rare occurrence. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, during the rise of the mass Negro movement, the only Blacks in the leadership of the AFL-CIO were Philip Randolph and Willard Townsend, both of whom actively defended the rights of black workers. This was no easy matter.

The main difficulties standing in the way of the Negro liberation movement, including the black workers' movement, are: the collective efforts of union bureaucracies and monopoly capital, racial prejudices amidst a considerable segment of America's white population, and the black nationalism of a number of black leaders who may not, and some of whom do not want to, understand the necessity of combined action by white and black workers. However, the overall direction of the nation's socio-economic and political development is favorable to the activization of the entire Negro movement. White workers are gradually getting away from their racial prejudices and are more and more coming to see that only by joining their efforts can black and white workers contain the limitless power of monopoly capital. The burden of racial prejudice is increasingly giving way to the immutable truth that the anti-discrimination movement is an inseparable part of the common fight of all workers for their class interests.

Labor unions have been and continue to be the largest workers' organizations and it is natural that the activization of the Negro liberation movement continues to develop parallel to the actions of Blacks in labor unions. Racial

discrimination in these unions has forced black workers to sharply increase their efforts to create their own local union divisions. The main task they set before themselves was combatting racial and national discrimination in American labor unions. The gains made by these divisions forced the AFL and CIO leaders to form special departments for work among Blacks. After the AFL and CIO merged in 1955, a Committee on Civil Rights was formed under AFL-CIO jurisdiction. The Committee's officially proclaimed goal was to fight for the civil rights of Blacks. Right-oriented bureaucrats seized the main leadership positions within the AFL-CIO, but the formation of a united labor federation was objectively a progressive event. It is significant that it was after the merging of the AFL-CIO that Blacks' struggle for equal union rights greatly intensified. Its main goal was to overcome racism among white workers. The Communist Party played a large part in resolving this most difficult task. The American Communists gave a Marxist-Leninist grounding to what progressive representatives of white and black workers had been conscious of in practice—the vital necessity that the working class find ways of uniting the efforts of all workers regardless of skin color in the struggle against monopoly capital.

Particular importance is allotted to the unity of white and black workers in the resolutions adopted at the Communist Party conventions. The Communist Party notes that racism is the main obstacle to class unity between Blacks and Whites. This unity can be achieved only if white workers are vehement in their opposition to racist practices in industry, labor unions, communities, schools, and everywhere else throughout the country. Communists, the party of the working class, have always given great attention to the role of unions in the workers' movement and in the class struggle. The growth of the revolutionary role of the working class in this era of super-industrialization, caused by the turbulent development of the revolution in science and technology poses the question of the role of the working class in the class struggle with particular acuteness.

Monopoly capital is betting heavily on the cultivation of racism within the workers' and labor-union movements to combat them. Under the specific historical conditions extant in the United States, not a single one of the crucial tasks confronting the nation's working class can be achieved without overcoming racism. This is why the Communist

Party's policy documents make note that the very existence of the unions as an effective tool of the workers will depend on their determination and ability to extirpate racism. The fight against racism is the most important condition for achieving the internal unity necessary to succeed against the employers. The struggle against racism promotes the formation and consolidation of close ties between the working class and the Negro movements. These ties are vitally necessary to resolve the main task confronting both: the struggle for equal rights for black workers.

Racism has always done great damage to the American workers' movement, tearing it apart from inside, leaving workers unarmed versus the united front of monopoly capital. Today the necessity to fight racism and to create a united anti-monopolistic front of white and black workers is especially keenly felt. The Communist Party insists that the price of racism for the working class has become catastrophic. But enormous will be the reward for solidarity between Whites and Blacks, and this can be achieved practically only when racism shall have been overcome.

Real life suggests the necessity of eliminating union discrimination as fast as possible, but the inertia of years of racist policies by the union bureaucracy and racist sentiments amidst certain white workers are taking their toll. And the creation of separate Negro associations within the unions has largely taken care of the problem of getting the black workers' movement started. This process has unfurled with particular rapidity in the auto- and aviation-workers' unions. The more progress with the creation of Negro union divisions, the more active has become the struggle by black workers against the discriminatory practices of employers and the union bureaucracy in numerous branches of industry. Blacks have made large advances, for instance, in the construction industry, where they had been especially discriminated against.

Negro union divisions have carried out a number of successful strike battles not sanctioned by the union bosses. These "wildcat strikes" have occurred, for example, at automobile factories. In a number of cases, white workers have also been active in these strikes. Thus, in the course of strike and class struggle, a united front of white and black workers is gradually coming together. Negro union divisions have been centers which the forces of the liberation movement of Blacks have gravitated to like to a magnet. Black commu-

nities in several industrial centers have discovered in Negro union divisions successfully functioning organizations capable of uniting and heading the struggle of Blacks against all manifestations of racial discrimination. Here is where the leading function of the Afro-American working class has found its manifestation relative to all other detachments of the Negro liberation movement: farmers, youth, women, the intelligentsia, and certain bourgeois circles.

The creation of Negro union divisions has stimulated the development of the strike struggle by the black proletariat which has enveloped even the southern states. The principal direction the Negro union movement is developing in at present is the creation of Afro-American caucuses within the union organizations, which have both Whites and Blacks. On a nationwide scale, their activity is coordinated by a coalition, started in 1972, of black union members.

Martin Luther King, the outstanding leader of the Black liberation movement, was one of those black leaders who, in the fierce battle with the forces of reaction, came to the conclusion that the alliance of Afro-Americans and the organized workers' movement was of vital necessity. King did not fully understand that only the leadership of the working class can guarantee victory in the struggle for the elimination of class exploitation, racial oppression, and wars. "But King saw," wrote Henry Winston, "that the basis for regaining the offensive was *working-class* strength moving in coalition with the middle class forces. He ... directed all his efforts toward involving the working class in a higher level of struggle with the Black Liberation movement—and with the poor and oppressed."⁵⁰

It is significant that the last big campaign against racial discrimination which King led was the garbage-collectors strike in Memphis, Tennessee. King, who had come to Memphis to lead the strike, was assassinated by racists on April 4, 1968. This was a loss the Negro movement could not make up for, but by this terrorist act the racists did not achieve their chief purpose—they could neither foil nor hold up the development of the Negro movement. The Memphis garbage-collectors were supported by the city's entire black community, which organized a boycott of stores and other commercial enterprises. The combined blows of the strikers and boycotters forced city officials to give in and accept the demands of the strikers, which principally concerned improving labor conditions.

The experience of the Memphis garbage-collectors is evidence that only the united efforts of all opponents of racial discrimination can create the conditions necessary for defending the elementary rights of colored citizens of the USA. This is only natural, since a powerful coalition of all kinds of racists in government, monopolies, and pogrom organizations like the Ku Klux Klan operates against adherents of racial equality. This powerful bloc must be opposed by the unity of all adherents of racial equality. The necessity of such a unity has become especially obvious now that the Reagan administration has taken over. The racist essence of the new government was brought out in its first practical socio-economic undertakings. President Reagan openly formulates his credo on the question of relations with US colored citizens. At the NAACP Convention, he stated: "Government is no longer the strong draft horse of minority progress."⁵¹ In essence, this is the program declaration of the US President on the question of his policy regarding Afro-Americans. Black American leaders point out that Reagan sides squarely with racism.

Wilmington Ten leader Ben Chavis said to a Soviet correspondent: "What the administration is doing now can be characterized only as a movement backwards, as a return of the black McCarthy era and the violence of the Ku Klux Klan. Dr. King was right when he warned Blacks that they could not rest easy until that battle was over. Today, reactionaries are ever more insolently trying to undermine the achievements Blacks made in the 1960s."⁵²

Union leaders, the press, and numerous public organizations point to the racist nature of the Reagan administration. It is no mere accident that the chieftains of the racist bandits do not conceal their delight at the actions of the Reagan administration directed against colored Americans. The polarization of sympathies and antipathies in modern-day America is crystal clear.

Obviously, openly speaking against 50 million colored citizens of the USA, 30 million of whom are black, is a thankless, and what is more, risky affair. This is why even Reagan has stated several times that he is an advocate of civil rights. However, the practical deeds of the administration he heads reveal the US President to be an outright racist.

Coretta King, widow of the black leader Martin Luther King, slain by racists, declared that President Reagan inflicted an insult on all US black citizens when he made

some cynical remarks on Congress legislation to proclaim King's birthday a national holiday. Congress passed the bill in October 1983 for purely political reasons connected with the 1984 election campaign then getting under way. Reagan himself made it clear that if he were to sign the bill at all, it would be only with great reluctance and only because its advocates were "stubborn" about immortalizing King's memory.

Leaders of the Negro liberation movement have no illusions concerning President Reagan's real policies on the race issue. The Reagan administration makes no bones about its anti-Negro positions. The President has opposed busing which is necessary for the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to be carried out. In essence, the President is in outright solidarity with the policies of racists in the South, those who favor the "states' rights". In his practical deeds and statements, Reagan shows that he longs for the days when forgotten, terrorized, and disorganized black Americans "knew their place".

The Republican administration's moves against black Americans have surprised neither Blacks nor the nation at large. It came out as early as the 1980 election campaign that the Republican Presidential candidate shared the views of racists on the minority problem. It is significant that not only did radical black leaders oppose Reagan, but so did bourgeois-liberal ones. For instance, NAACP leaders criticized President Carter's policies on Blacks during the 1980 election campaign, but all the same asked black voters to support the Democratic candidate and vote against Reagan. We know the 1980 election ended with Carter's defeat and with the Republican candidate becoming President. Many Blacks were in a state of shock after the election. The NAACP convention was called immediately after the election. "According to the association's executive director, Benjamin L. Hooks, the reaction of some Blacks to Mr. Reagan's election has been 'near hysteria'. 'I have been amazed and perturbed at the number of black people who feel that we are in a real warfare,' he said at a news conference, 'who are buying pistols and ammunition and rifles and who are preparing for overt violence.'"⁵³

The Reagan administration's attack on the economic rights of black Americans is being accompanied by the activization of violence by the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist organizations of racists. The goal of this frontal

attack on colored Americans is obvious—to break their will to resist and maintain the fight for equal rights. But another thing is equally obvious: the time is gone when the liberation movement of black Americans could be restrained by terrorist acts.

The activization of the struggle by colored citizens of the USA for their equal rights is inevitable, and this is acknowledged not only by many public figures and politicians in the US, but by those abroad as well.

The Struggle Against Racism

Terror, the physical extermination of one's opponent, is the final argument of political reaction. When this argument is brought into action on a regular basis, it indicates society is going through a severe political crisis. In the post-war United States, assassinations have become so common that they have become almost a regular occurrence. And it is characteristic that the American Themis impartially states after every assassination that the latest victim of political terror was no more than a consequence of an individual act of terrorism. It is significant that the world's most perfect police apparatus always turns out to be suspiciously helpless whenever the matter of investigating the latest act of political terror comes up.

It is well known that crime in the USA is escalating at a horrifying rate. But any serious crime has important motivating reasons. And the American reactionaries resort to the physical extermination of black leaders only when all other means of struggle have been exhausted and when the opponent is truly the most serious menace to them.

Martin Luther King was murdered just when he had clearly moved to the left. The reasons for the assassination of another popular black leader, Malcolm X, were similar. An American racist court likewise tried to give Angela Davis the death penalty primarily because the heroic struggle of this young Communist in behalf of the black people was truly a serious menace to American racists. "The racist ruling class," wrote Henry Winston, "could not tolerate the meaning, the inspiration, to the nation's exploited and oppressed, of Angela's membership in the Party based on the liberating principles of Marxism-Leninism."⁵⁴

Those fighting for the liberation of the black people from

racial discrimination have always been compelled to take into account that the forces of reaction are prepared at any time to unleash a weapon, upholding their privilege to the super-exploitation of Blacks. Reactionary, and often liberal circles too, claim that racists' renunciation of the Lynch court means that the struggle against discrimination has been shifted today into the channel of calm, one might almost say academic, discussions where there is no room for blood and violence. Adherents of this point of view consider that evolution, the softening of mores, tolerance, and the search for ways of understanding one another are today the high road to resolving the Negro problem. Leaders of white America do not tire of appealing to Blacks for patience and calm in awaiting the gradual resolution of the racial problem. It was President Eisenhower who, in 1957, during a tense crisis caused when racists refused to submit to the Supreme Court's anti-school-segregation decision, said that the main thing is patience.

What were the goals of the colored Americans who united to form the Black Panther Party? The party's program said they wanted the freedom and power to decide the fate of America's black people, and gave considerable attention to economic matters. It said that party members were trying to achieve full employment for the black people. Radical-sounding was the point in the program which said that unless white employers ensured the solution of the problem of employing Blacks, it would be necessary to deprive them of the means of production and hand them over to a community so that those living in this community could guarantee work to all those who needed it and achieve a higher standard of living. The Black Panthers gave considerable attention to the demands of black teenagers. This was reflected in the party's active participation in the anti-war movement (in relation to the Vietnam war) and its appeals to young Afro-Americans to refuse to participate in the war. The party's program said that black Americans refused to fight and kill those of another skin color who, like the black people, had fallen victim to white racists—the rulers of America.

The Black Panthers were the first prominent black organization to strongly favor using armed force to protect the interests of black people. The party's program called Blacks to arm themselves in self-defense. Appeals from party leaders led to the formation of armed Negro volunteer groups.

Panther leaders became more and more insistent on the necessity of going over to urban guerilla warfare.

These appeals took into account neither the real disposition of forces nor the sentiments of most Blacks and their allies who did not share the bellicose aspirations of the Black Panther leaders. In a number of cases these ultra-leftist appeals became provocative, since any armed conflict involving Blacks could be used as an excuse for punitive operations. And in fact, the authorities did unleash a hail of repressions on the Black Panthers. The police simultaneously raided the party's headquarters and the homes of its leaders. The police burst into their homes at night and opened fire on sleeping people without any warning. Many of the party's leaders were wiped out without any trial or investigation, and a number of them found themselves behind bars. The repressions were important in weakening the party's positions, and soon it found itself isolated from the mass Negro movement.

Soon after the terror campaign against them, the Black Panthers split into two factions. One of them advocated "black capitalism", saying Blacks should form their own small businesses as the prime remedy for the race problem. The other faction became ultra-leftist in the belief that only immediate and ultimate warfare could help Afro-Americans resolve the issues confronting them. The party's split was the prologue to its complete political collapse, since neither ultra-leftist provocative calls-to-arms nor the theory and practice of "black capitalism" have any historical prospects.

The rise and fall of the Black Panthers and the proper understanding of the causes of this phenomenon is extremely important for a correct evaluation of many aspects of the Negro movement, especially the young people's. In 1966, when black teenagers, heeding the calls of Black Panther leaders, took up arms, this meant in practice separate actions which diverted black urban teenagers from the task of achieving a unity of working people and developing mass struggle.

The repressions against the Black Panthers gave rise to a large campaign of solidarity with members of the organization. Numerous organizations of black Americans, in particular, the NAACP, actively supported the Panthers. The Association's leader said in a September 1971 meeting with the then US Vice President Spiro Agnew: "We and the

Black Panthers are on the same side but we may not agree all down the line. The Panthers have no more than 1,000 to 1,500 members but they have a great deal more sympathy than that, because they complain of things the average Negro knows are true."⁵⁵ Roy Wilkins, the Executive Director of the NAACP, demanded from the Attorney General a stop to the murders of and repressions against the Black Panthers, an objective investigation of the facts of the terror and bringing those guilty to trial.

At the first stage of the Black Panther movement, it seemed its participants were beginning to lean toward Marxism. Courses were formed for studying Marxist-Leninist theory. The Panthers showed particular interest in studying the historical paper Georgi Dimitrov gave on the united front against fascism and war at the VII Comintern Congress in 1935. The idea of a united front is of great relevance to the Negro movement, as well. "But," wrote Henry Winston, "instead of linking theory with practice, the actions taken by the Black Panther Party turned the concept of the united front into a sectarian caricature of the Marxist-Leninist principles on which it is based ... It becomes increasingly clear that the Black Panther Party had only adopted some of the phraseology of Marxism-Leninism, but not the ideology."⁵⁶

The Communists are the only political party in the country which in the struggle against racism, as well as in all its other activities, is guided by scientific theory—Marxism-Leninism. This is the great strength of the Communist Party and the main reason why racist reactionaries hate and fear Communists and why the Communists are the main object of terror on the part of racists.

Henry Winston, the outstanding son of the black people, a brilliant theoretician and active fighter against racism, and the Chairman of the Communist Party, became a victim of racists. He lost his sight because of cruel treatment by his prison guards. A severe ailment did not break the will of this fearless Communist. Released from prison under pressure by international public opinion, Henry Winston said that while physically blind now, he can politically see better than ever. He still has his amazing energy, industry, joie de vivre, and sense of humor. He frequently visits the USSR and each time, besides serious theoretical discussions, there is socializing with a beautiful, witty fellow. Winston often meets with Soviet experts on America. At one

such meeting he said: "It is tough to be black in America, but much tougher if you are also red."

Yes, in truth it is immeasurably harder for communist fighters against racism to fulfill their international duty before colored Americans than for representatives of any other, even the most radical, political organizations. The fate of Angela Davis, that heroic daughter of the US Negro people whose name is known today to millions of people the world over, is yet another reminder of this.

Angela Davis was born into a Negro family of modest means and it was only thanks to her outstanding abilities and great industriousness that she got an excellent education in the humanities, which is rather a rare thing for Blacks. A social sciences instructor at a Los Angeles University, Angela Davis held tremendous weight with her students. They loved and respected her not only for her erudition and keen mind, but also for her exceptional boldness. The young instructor did not think it necessary to hide the fact that she was a member of the Communist Party. This was a real challenge to her superiors at the university, though. Taking advantage of the first excuse they could find, the university board of trustees took away Angela Davis's right to teach. Harassment of her continued after her departure from the university, too. Racists set themselves the task of physically exterminating the young scholar. It was decided to frame up a trial. The forces of reaction, by contriving a criminal case against her, intended to discredit her in the eyes of young people. The highly important 1972 election was at hand and the reactionaries were attempting to kindle anti-communist hysteria and once more sway the election in their favor by playing on the common man's prejudices and fears.

And lastly, Angela Davis was an Afro-American. A successful trial against a Black, what's more, a Communist, would put the Blacks in their place, thought the racists, and keep them from putting their weighty say into the election campaign. The racists used the tragic events in the courtroom of San Rafael, California, as an excuse for arresting Angela. A group of young Afro-Americans made a desperate and unsuccessful attempt to free their arrested comrades during the trial. The gunfight which broke out in the courthouse left victims. This incident was used by the reactionaries as an excuse for arresting Angela Davis. It seemed the racists could celebrate. Everything was going great. The

handguns brought into the courtroom belonged to Angela Davis. She played a leading role in the committee for the defense of George Jackson, the principal defendant in the trial. All of this, considering the by no means objective trial which awaited Angela, was to cause her great difficulties in establishing her alibi.

The entire powerful propagandistic apparatus of the USA was employed to stir up unhealthy agitation around the Davis case, to make the public believe she really was guilty. The best forces of the powerful US criminal investigation apparatus were put on Angela's tracks. The FBI's widely publicized manhunt for Angela Davis was likewise used to stir up anti-communist and anti-Negro hysteria. For the first time in the entire history of the United States, the FBI added a woman's name to its Ten-Most-Wanted List. At last, the widely advertized arrest operation of Angela Davis was finished. The 28-year-old instructor was arrested in a New York motel.

The reactionaries were triumphant. President Nixon thought it necessary to congratulate FBI chief Edgar Hoover in a TV speech on the arrest of the "political terrorist". From this congratulation it was rather clear how the coming trial would be set up not as a criminal one, but as a political one. The Governor of California and future President of the United States Ronald Reagan, and the Governor of New York Nelson Rockefeller, who was fond of playing at democracy, for the moment found common ground. Against all procedural standards, Angela Davis was immediately extradited to the California authorities, where the reactionaries were already looking forward to the glee of fast and merciless requital against the young Communist. That events would develop according to a script worked out by the retired actor Ronald Reagan the racists did not doubt for a minute.

In her autobiography, Angela Davis recalls flying from New York to California with a heavy heart: "That state held the dubious distinction of being one of the most advanced in the country when it came to quelling resistance." The courageous Communist was sent to California for real retribution. Angela writes: "I thought about Aaron Henry, the last victim to be strangled by gas in San Quentin's death chamber. On the date of his execution, his mother begged for an audience with the governor. Ronald Reagan felt no compassion for her."⁵⁷

American racists were firmly convinced that a quick and unfair trial of Angela would bring in the planned political dividends. But events soon to take place made some changes in these calculations. First leaflets demanding Angela Davis's release came out in New York immediately after her arrest. Henry Winston stresses that "a mass movement of unprecedented size and scope in the defense of a political prisoner"⁵⁸ developed. Over 300 committees for the release of Angela Davis were formed in various US cities. It is worth noting that both black and white opponents of racism worked in these committees. The A. Davis defense movement was an important stage in the development of unity of action by Whites and Blacks in the struggle for the equal rights of colored Americans. The struggle for the release of A. Davis took on a definite national character. Young people, especially women, prominent figures in the union movement, and workers in education, culture, and the Church actively participated in it.

In the spring and summer months of 1972, the author of this book was called upon to speak to students in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Ithaca, and California. Discord in political opinions is perhaps one of the most characteristic features of the American student auditorium. But it is interesting that not in one auditorium did I hear a single attempt to defend the executioners of Angela Davis. US students were one of the most active forces in defending the courageous Communist.

"Free Angela Davis!" This slogan quickly spread beyond the borders of the United States. Mass demonstrations in defense of A. Davis took place in many countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America—all over the world. The Soviet people, especially Soviet youth, took the most active part in the fate of the heroic daughter of the US black people. They were in the front ranks of the international fighters for her release. And when Angela Davis visited the Soviet Union soon after her release, she was welcomed with great warmth and sincerity everywhere.

American racists were obviously unprepared for such a powerful explosion of protests against the Angela Davis case. But they all the same set in motion the entire repressive apparatus of bourgeois justice so as to fracture the will of the courageous Communist and get the court to condemn her to death in the gas chamber. California court officials categorically refused to move the trial elsewhere where an

objective and representative jury could be picked. Moreover, in spite of American laws and traditions, she was refused release on bail. Angela was kept in jail for 16 months, mainly in the trying circumstances of solitary confinement. The state of Angela's health soon took a bad turn to the worse, but this did not break her determination to fight it out to the end.

Angela Davis was given inspiration by the progressive international and American public. The authorities in Washington, the Governor of California Reagan, and the judge conducting the trial were all bombarded by many letters, telegrams, and protest resolutions. It was a campaign as yet unseen in its dimensions, organization, and singleness of purpose. There had been nothing like it during the bleak cold war years, when America's progressive forces, operating under extremely difficult circumstances, firmly opposed the death penalty for the Rosenbergs.

The racists gave in under the great pressure of American and international public opinion. The court was forced to acquit Angela Davis. It is difficult to overestimate this event in the history of the heroic struggle of the best representatives of the American people against racism. Angela Davis's exoneration confirmed the correctness of the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party, which favors a mass organized struggle against racism. The release of the courageous Communist led to a consolidation of the Communist Party's position. It was the Communist Party that initiated and organized the mass movement in her defense. Henry Winston wrote: "The Communist Party took the initiative and gave the leadership in building the movement that saved Angela. And it was her frank public acknowledgment of Party membership, her proud identification of herself with her Party, and her exemplary conduct as a Party member and leader that helped to win her the respect and support of masses."⁵⁹

US students played an important part in the movement for Angela Davis's release. For a number of different reasons young people, particularly those in college, frequently act as catalysts of public opinion and initiate many progressive undertakings. The entire course of US politics in the post-war period, the specifics of the country's student movement, and the intensification of the struggle against all forms of racism, all helped the movement in defense of the rights of colored Americans to occupy truly

one of the most important places in the student movement.

The fight by students against racism found and still finds its manifestation in a variety of forms. In February 1960, black students declared their first sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina, to protest their being refused service in the cafe of the local department store. This form of protest against racial segregation became very common in all the southern states. People began to "sit in" not only in public dining rooms, but also at libraries, churches, theaters, and sport complexes. The great dimensions of this movement are evidenced by the fact that in 1960 alone, over 50,000 people participated in sit-ins in 100 cities in the South. The movement outgrew the framework of a purely student protest against racial segregation. It got the very broadest support of various detachments of the black intelligentsia.

Many thousands of white students in both the North and South supported black students. The rapid development of the student movement against racial discrimination posed the necessity of creating some kind of coordinating center to organize and direct the activities of numerous student organizations spread out over the country's great expanses. Hence, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) appeared in 1960. The first measures the SNCC leadership took fit completely into a program of nonviolent actions as American liberal circles understood it, since they see reform as a panacea for all the ills of America's "sick society". "Love and rejection of violence" was the slogan under which thousands of students demonstrated against discrimination. The "freedom rides" which began in 1961 with the most active participation of students had just this kind of spirit to them. Those who went along on these freedom rides demanded desegregation of buses in the South and appropriate service from the bus operators.

With the active support of local racists, the defenders of law and order were vicious in dealing with the freedom riders. Police action against freedom riders in Jackson, Mississippi, became particularly notorious. A genuine battle was played out here, with the police using armored cars and machine guns against the demonstrators. Many students were injured, and over 300 demonstrators arrested.

Sit-ins and boycotts threatened profits, and so, fearing

large material losses, many racist employers were compelled to give up racial segregation.

The most aware section of the student body realized that racism in the South could be successfully combatted only by bringing into the movement those millions of black voters who had been terrorized by the racists and kept from exercising their right to vote.

In 1962-1964, the SNCC, in coordination with other Negro organizations, began actively to involve Blacks from remote areas in the South in election campaigns. The racists were well aware that should the majority of Afro-Americans go to the polls, it would be tantamount to destroying their uncontested grip on the South. The movement was beset by beatings, arrests, and dispersal of demonstrators with tear gas. In the spring of 1963, NAACP activist Medgar Evers was murdered by racists. In that same year, four little Negro girls were murdered in a Birmingham church that was bombed by racists.

The culminating point in the movement to involve Blacks in the election battle was the Mississippi "summer of freedom" of 1964. Blacks made up 43 per cent of the population in 1964 in this citadel of racism. But not a single one of them held an elected office. Only five percent of Afro-Americans who had the right to vote were entered on voter registration lists. Over 100 activists in the civil rights movement worked in Mississippi during the summer of 1964. Three quarters of them were SNCC members.

The reactionaries desperately clung to their positions in Mississippi. The "summer of freedom" was a very hot one: from July to October 1964, three civil rights protestants in Mississippi were murdered, three were wounded, and over 1,000 were arrested. Thirty-five churches were burnt, and so were many homes and other buildings. The more experience was gained in fighting racism, the more apparent it became that the basic trend in the anti-racist movement was increasingly shifting to the struggle for the socio-economic rights of the black people. The most aware fighters against discrimination realized it was necessary to extirpate the roots of racism. Only by doing so could the struggle against racism have auspicious prospects.

More and more often demands were being put forward that Blacks be guaranteed jobs and that discrimination in production be eradicated. Individual leaders of the SNCC even put forth the demands that the nation's largest industrial

corporations be nationalized. The US racist ruling class was willing to make individual concessions to get rid of or cover over the most glaring sores of racism, but the racists, backed up by the powerful employer class, desperately resisted resolution of matters like eliminating poverty, unemployment, ghettos, and the disproportion between the educational level of Whites and Blacks. The most stubborn resistance to these problems is attributable to the fact that eliminating discrimination's socio-economic base would inevitably lead to the collapse of the entire multi-stage system of racism and the loss of super-profits which monopoly capital makes on the super-exploitation of millions of colored Americans.

The elimination of the most glaring socio-economic manifestations of racism was possible only by uniting the efforts of all opponents of racial discrimination and, first of all, by creating a united front of the working class and Negro movements. The student movement of the 1960s and early 1970s undertook certain efforts in this direction which also took place in subsequent years. But they met with no serious success at all. The struggle for the eradication of racism in socio-economic relations even today continues to remain a most important task of the US anti-racist movement.

The struggle by black students against racial discrimination in universities and colleges became significantly more active in the late 1960s on the crest of the overall wave of the student movement's surge. There was serious unrest in the fall of 1967 at Harvard University, one of the country's best known universities. There were student rebellions shortly afterwards in Tennessee, South Carolina, Mississippi, Virginia, North Carolina, and other southern states. In a number of cases, student actions grew into armed conflicts with the police. There were demonstrations by black students in more than 150 Negro colleges in 1969. In a number of cases, the student demonstrations joined up with the anti-racist movement of Afro-Americans.

The struggle against racism was important in such an outstanding event in the history of the US student movement as the "uprising" at Columbia University in the spring of 1968. Not only did black and white students take part in it, so did young people from Harlem, the New York 'ghetto located next to the university. The action of the Columbia University students was a kind of detonator, which started a whole series of student "riots" that gripped nearly all US

colleges and universities from the spring of 1968 to the spring of 1970. The movement's scope can be gauged from the fact that in the academic year of 1968-1969 alone, 50,000 students took part in student uprisings. One of the main demands made during these demonstrations was the struggle against racial discrimination.

The US student movement is running up against considerable difficulties. It has no united leadership. Nationalistic feelings are rather common among black students. Chauvinist feelings have not completely died out among white students. All of this is hindering the creation of a united front of white and black opponents of racism. To a considerable degree, repressions by the authorities, often acting in concert with racists, are blocking the successful development of the student movement. The effect of these and other factors led to a certain dying down of the student movement in the early 1970s, including the struggle of students against racism.

Economic discrimination against Blacks, segregation in education and housing, the all-round discrimination against Afro-Americans in the southern states—all this stimulated the fight of black and white opponents of racism. Progressive America firmly demanded a radical solution to the urgent problems of Blacks; a new explosion in racial relations was imminent. In this state of affairs, the US ruling circles undertook one more attempt through legislative measures to defuse the tension which had built up. A new Civil Rights Act was passed in 1960. The law provided for the enactment of legal measures for ensuring Blacks the right to vote and for the criminal prosecution of especially glaring acts of violence against Blacks and upsetting the public order. The new Act did not differ much from other legislative acts protecting civil rights. It was another legislative half-measure calculated more at grabbing black votes in connection with the nearing 1960 Presidential election than with civil rights. This was the more than modest result of eight years of Republican government in regard to the Negro problem.

All the same Eisenhower, without false modesty, extolled as best he could the merits of his government in the solution of the Negro problem. In a letter of August 1, 1955, to the Republican National Committee, he evaluated the Republican government's achievements on the Negro question in the following manner: "But all of us have reason for just pride in the tremendous advances of the past thirty months. The

credit (pre-election promises—*R.I.*) should be widely shared."⁶⁰

The statement of the Republican Party leadership on this matter was in more bravura tones. In summing up Eisenhower's first four years in office, the party leaders noted: "More Negroes have received policy-making Government positions under Eisenhower than in any other Administration in American history, and at a higher level." Unrestraint in extolling their own deeds, the Republican leaders concluded: "Under the Eisenhower Administration, Americans of all races, creeds, and colors have made the greatest Civil Rights gains since Abraham Lincoln's time."⁶¹ In evaluating his main pet-project on race relations, the Civil Rights Act, Eisenhower himself said on May 6, 1960: "I believe the Act is an historic step forward in the field of civil rights."⁶²

By no means did all leading figures in the Republican government share the optimism drummed up by the Republican leaders. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, for example, made himself quite clear on this account: "The weakest point in our relations in the United States is prejudice in this country."⁶³

Undoubtedly, the opinion of Blacks themselves is the main criterion for evaluating the positive contribution of the Republican administration in resolving the Negro question. This opinion was far less optimistic than the one of the great majority of Republican leaders.

Discrimination against Afro-Americans and the unpunished mass terror against those fighting to throw off racial intolerance have forced even moderate Afro-American leaders to come out with demands that decisive measures be taken to protect the rights of the black population. Afro-American leaders have underscored the hypocrisy of American leaders trying to play the part of defenders of democracy on a world scale and simultaneously approving of racial intolerance in their own country.

Roy Wilkins, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP, wrote to the White House that the US government should make appropriate announcements and take the necessary action to defend the rights of American citizens, since it comes out daily with statements on the rights of citizens in foreign countries. Ordinary citizens of Afro-American origin spoke out on this matter with sharpness. A black serviceman wrote President Eisenhower on September 17, 1956: "Several Europeans and Scandinavians stated that the Americans

are worse than the Nazis... As I sit here in Europe for the safety of democracy, I find that there's little democracy for me in my homeland or others like me." Thinking of what was going on in Little Rock, the letter-writer emphasized that the US was on the brink of "a civil racial war".⁶⁴

James E. Walker, Chairman of the Committee to Present the Truth about the Name "Negro", wrote Eisenhower on December 18, 1960 that instead of taking firm measures to put a stop to racist excesses in the South, "you choose to improve your Golf score". The letter concluded with: "We are no longer like cattle. We shall have our complete freedom even if we must die in our peaceful resistance against Discrimination and Segregation. We are Afro-Americans. This is our home, we want our full share of this Americana."⁶⁵

The Eisenhower administration extolled its merits in eliminating racial discrimination in the armed forces in every way possible. But the true state of affairs had nothing in common with the roseate pictures painted in official briefings by government and military leaders. Incidentally, US leaders admitted in confidential documents the continued existence of racial discriminatory limitations in the country's armed forces. In a memorandum made up for President Eisenhower on June 23, 1953, for example, the Under Secretary of the Navy said that racial discrimination was flourishing in Norfolk, Virginia. Thirty-five percent of the 30,000 men serving in the area were black. They were used principally for arduous tasks and discriminated against in bars, restaurants, cafeterias, and other public places. The authors of the memorandum explained that racial discrimination was a tradition in the southern states. Assurances were given in the memorandum that racial discrimination would be abolished. At the same time, it was stressed: "They all strongly advised against being forced to do it under a directive. This they were certain would cause trouble."⁶⁶

On April 25, 1956, the Afro-American William Williams wrote Congressman Adam Clayton Powell: "I am sure, segregation is far from dead in the United States Army." The letter-writer insisted: "School segregation, inequalities of assignment opportunity, separate enlisted club facilities and a host of the other evils, are still here with us... The fact remains, however, through clever subterfuge and political manoeuvre, segregationists still manage to evade the law as promulgated by presidential proclamation [meaning the

law prohibiting discrimination in the armed forces—*R.I.*]."⁶⁷ The author asked that his name not be used.

Racial discrimination elicited firm protests from war veterans who remembered the fraternity-in-arms between black and white soldiers during the Second World War. On January 10, 1957, the American Veterans Committee said in an address to Eisenhower that racial discrimination "is not a localized problem but crosses state lines... It is clearly no longer a problem of community or states rights but a problem of national concern."⁶⁸

Discrimination against Blacks did great harm to United States prestige abroad. Numerous accounts of racial intolerance in the US were particularly apparent when set against the successful resolution of national and racial problems in socialist countries and when contrasted to the successful building of a new life in countries liberated from colonial dependence. This problem had become particularly acute as early as the 1950s, since the US had put much more effort into its foreign policy and at the same time was carrying on enormous ideological work abroad, trying to popularize the American way of life in every way possible.

American specialists in psychological warfare were constantly running up against the problem of the United States' losing face abroad in connection with racial discrimination. One such specialist, Captain John Silvera, wrote the White House: "In attacking the United States on the treatment of Negroes, the Soviets have scored victory after victory, and most of all are continuing to destroy the credibility of all that we can say about the benefits of our way of life."⁶⁹ The letter-writer linked his historical digressions with the contemporary problems of black Americans and was completely right to conclude: "The story of the Negro is indeed the saga of America."

Analyzing what stance the public abroad took on the Negro problem in the US, Captain Silvera made the following generalizations. "How does the rest of the world interpret the role of Negroes in America?" asked the writer. In his opinion, "the following are probably the most predominant stereotypes of attitudes and opinion:

"a. Negroes in America are a despised group universally hated by the rest of America.

"b. Negroes are forced to work for slave wages and to live in concentrated ghettos, denied free access to public schools, hospitals, etc.

"c. Negroes are denied any semblance of justice in the Courts.

"d. Negroes are lynched and burned at the stake, bombed from their homes—denied the right of trial by jury, and are forced to ride in the rear of all public conveyances.

"e. Negroes are never given an opportunity to participate in the affairs of the American government and are appreciated only as entertainers and sports figures."

The questions John Silvera raised were highly important to the US ruling circles not only in terms of psychological warfare. They were connected with US foreign policy, with its many-faceted problem of popularizing the American way of life. And all through the post-war period both Democratic and Republican governments have given top priority to this propaganda.

Captain Silvera got an answer back to his letter from the Defense Department. The letter said: "The appropriate use of color in psychological warfare, in a world which is more largely colored than not, can prove to be our greatest secret weapon."⁷⁰ This American "secret weapon" was constantly backfiring, which was predictable, since no propaganda efforts could conceal from the international public US discrimination against Blacks and other colored Americans.

This was a serious setback for the United States on the foreign-policy front. An objectively inclined person outside the US could not help but wonder that the United States was resolutely trying to be "world leader". What could it offer other nations when colored Americans, who comprised 11 percent of the country's population, live in constant racial discrimination? It is characteristic that in numerous letters to the White House and in the statements of public figures the matter constantly comes up over the entire post-war period, and in very pungent style, of the unpleasant impression discrimination against Blacks and other colored Americans was making on other nations.

On June 15, 1955, Congressman Stuart Udall wrote Eisenhower that he had introduced a bill into the House of Representatives that would give federal fiscal assistance to schools practicing desegregation. The letter-writer did not conceal that the resolution of this issue was calculated on having a certain effect on foreign policy. "I urge you to seriously consider my bill. If ... it is enacted into law it will allow us to effectively demonstrate to the entire world

that we are a nation in which equality and consideration for all people is the unfailing standard."⁷¹

In the autumn of 1958, Eisenhower received a letter from Sedalia, Missouri, which said that, considering the opinion of the international public, which was well informed of the sharp clash over racial discrimination in the US, the unsuccessful attempts to desegregate schools in the South were causing Americans serious problems. "There is an old saying," the letter went on, "that 'People that live in glass houses shouldn't throw bricks.'"⁷²

The voice of organized labor was ever more steadfastly heard along with the many other protests against racial discrimination. The most aware white workers understood that racial discrimination was not in keeping with their class interests. On October 25, 1956, the Secretary-Treasurer of the California State Federation of Labor wrote Eisenhower that the union's annual convention favored eliminating "discrimination because of race, color, or creed in housing, public as well as private. Organized labor continues to be shocked at the manner in which this problem is being ignored, especially in the area of federal private housing programs."⁷³

On April 19, 1960, John DeVito, President of the Cleveland local of the International Union of United Automobile, Aircraft, Agricultural Implement Workers of America wrote to Eisenhower that the local had adopted a resolution asking the US President to utilize all his influence and power, "to help the Negro in his current struggle for freedom. We in the labor movement believe that freedom is everybody's business." Touching on the connection between policy on the Negro question and US foreign policy, the letter-writer insisted: "Americans cannot wear a false face and have two policies, one for the countries abroad and one for the people at home."⁷⁴

US leaders were seriously concerned over the negative impression that racial discrimination inside the country was making on the international public, more precisely, over the difficulties the policy of racial discrimination was creating for the US on the international arena. For one thing, this was evidenced by Eisenhower's reply of September 26, 1957 to a letter from John Hay Whitney, the US Ambassador to Britain. "Your letter was seemingly the first document on my desk in weeks that hasn't concerned itself with Little Rock."

The situation in this preserve of racism evidently worried

Eisenhower a good deal. In any case, despite the fact the Ambassador did not bring the problem up, the President answered him: "The situation there [in Little Rock—*R.I.*] has been frustrating in the extreme, and a solution to the over-all problem is far from clear... Most of all I deplore the attention given to it by the world press, and the consequent impression made upon friends and enemies alike."⁷⁵

The 1950s were an important landmark in the struggle of Blacks and all opponents of racial intolerance for the abolition of racial discrimination. New forms of struggle for Afro-Americans' civil rights appeared at this time. Of particular importance were the mass actions by Blacks in the US South. These actions turned even this preserve of racism into a people's battlefield for abolishing racial discrimination in all its forms. Not only did the self-awareness of the Negro people grow in the 1950s, but the alliance of white and black workers against the racial and social oppression of monopoly capital also underwent a certain consolidation.

In the 1950s, especially during Eisenhower's Presidency, the nation's ruling circles to a certain extent succeeded in amortizing racial conflicts. This policy of maneuvering between different racial groupings was greatly aided by the outwardly effective, but in practice, insubstantial race-relations legislation passed by federal authorities while Eisenhower was in office. This legislation could only postpone the explosion which was ready to go off in the area of racial relations. The main point was that racial oppression was interwoven with class oppression. This created a complex range of racial and social problems which promoted the rapid accumulation of social dynamite not only in the South, but on a nationwide scale as well. The result was inevitably to be new deep-reaching convulsions in both racial and class relations.

The Negro problem played a highly important part in the 1960 election campaign, as shown by the fact that the Democratic platform on the racial question was the most radical one in the party's history. The Democratic Party promised to guarantee Blacks the right to vote, to prosecute anyone violating civil rights laws, to broaden fair-hiring laws, equal housing opportunities, etc. John Kennedy, the Democratic candidate, won the election by the slimmest of margins. Black votes played an important part in the outcome.

In the 1960 election, the Democrats came out with the most radical platform to protect the rights of Blacks that

the party had ever formulated. These promises of the victorious party once more were to remain on paper. It was not just chance that while the Democrats were in office the most severe racial upheavals of the entire post-war period took place. As far as the Democrats' 1960 platform was concerned, it was just another well acted out political trick.

Lack of unity in the ranks of Blacks is causing them serious difficulties in the further development of their liberation movement. The great number of different organizations uniting Blacks of the most varied political stances is the outward manifestation of this. The oldest and largest black organization, the NAACP, along with the National Urban League, which has a similar program, increased their activities in the post-war years. Both are closely linked to the bourgeois-liberal circles, which leaves its imprint on their activities.

Three other organizations were significantly more to the left in both their methods of struggle and their eventual aims: the Southern Christian Leadership Council, formed by King in 1957; the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which got started in 1942; and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). All three operated under the slogan "Freedom Now!" and to some extent were reliant on mass actions against racism.

The Black Muslims stood apart from everyone else, their peculiar feature being religious exaltation. They demanded complete isolation from all Whites and fought for the creation of a separate black country on US territory. With these basic demands, the Muslims completely isolated themselves from progressive circles in the white community and from many black Americans active in the fight against racism. The Black Muslims were another example of black nationalism which became common in the liberation movement of Afro-Americans.

The Black Capitalism Movement also is nationalistic in nature, but it is actively supported by US ruling circles desirous of splitting the Afro-American movement along a class principle and establishing a reliable buttress for themselves in the black capitalists. The Black Capitalism Movement has a definite social base. Prosperous circles of Blacks interested in consolidating their positions within the black community support it. Illusions are common enough among colored Americans that American reality offers equal oppor-

tunities to all Americans to "make it" in the world, in this case, by joining the ranks of black capitalists.

Certainly, with monopoly capital's rapid development, the petty bourgeoisie and especially the black petty bourgeoisie, is unable to have any real economic or political power. However, an influential layer of petty and middle bourgeoisie has held on in the country. This layer, especially in the area of service, fulfills functions necessary for monopoly capitalism, which plays the dominating role in both the US economy and politics. Monopoly capital favors, to certain limits, the development of Black Capitalism and gives it the assistance it needs.

Bourgeois-liberal circles in the Afro-American movement actively support the growth of the black bourgeoisie, seeing in such growth a strengthening of "black power". Leaders of black bourgeois-reformist organizations take this slogan as their own political credo. NAACP leaders state that "black power" will cooperate with other authorities. Black power "is not going to be developed for the purpose of creating a separate society, but for the purpose of levelling the walls of separation in this society."⁷⁶ Leaders of the extreme left in the Afro-American movement are also actively fighting for Black Capitalism.

The entire history of black Americans shows that they have made progress in the struggle for their rights only when they have acted in a united front with white opponents of racial discrimination. Black nationalism is one of the sizeable obstacles to forming such a unity and it is natural that US progressive forces, consistently fighting for the equal rights of Afro-Americans, firmly oppose all forms of black nationalism.

Communists are among them. The Constitution of the Communist Party USA states in Article IV, Section 11: "It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle against all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation; against all ideological influences and practices of barbarous 'racial' theories such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism."⁷⁷ Racial and national problems are given priority attention at all conventions of the Communist Party and in all theoretical works by Party leaders. The general line of American Communists on this question was clearly set out in the Main Political Resolution of the 24th National Convention of the Communist Party USA in 1975: "Central to the building of the organized

strength of the working class and its allies is the necessity to struggle incessantly against the divisionism of white supremacist racism in all of its manifestations. Nothing is so destructive of the unity and will to struggle against the common foe as the paralyzing poison of racism and national prejudice of all kinds."⁷⁸

Black nationalism advocates claim that their opponents ignore the natural desire of Afro-Americans to strengthen their sense of national pride and respect for the historical traditions of their people. Communists uncover the complete groundlessness of such accusations. Henry Winston, giving the Communist Party's viewpoint, has stated: "The growth of national pride is an expression of the new level of consciousness in the struggle against segregation which combines a recognition of the special problems of the ghetto with a recognition of the imperative necessity for the unity between Negro and white."⁷⁹

National pride and nationalism are far from being the same thing. In his report to the 22nd Convention of the Communist Party USA, its General Secretary, Gus Hall, said: "We firmly believe that bourgeois nationalism is a weapon of monopoly capitalism. It is not an instrument the working class can adopt as its own. We realize a working-class revolutionary party must take into account feelings of national pride and a sense of people's patriotism. But we do not accept the bourgeois concept of nationalism that is used to cover up class divisions and class exploitation. This cannot be the outlook of a working-class revolutionary party. National consciousness is one thing; nationalism is quite another matter."⁸⁰

The ideology of black nationalism is difficult to understand without considering the role of Negro churches. Historically, it came about that Negro churches at all stages in the history of black Americans were an important ideological, political, and organizational center in the black liberation movement. Religion's role has been passed along to our time, as well. The Church not only satisfied and still satisfies the religious and spiritual needs of Afro-Americans, it is simultaneously a center of culture, aid, self-government, and business. Churches organize schools. Many church leaders are at the same time well-known leaders in the Afro-American movement. The most illustrative example of this is the social and political activity of Martin Luther King. By the beginning of the 20th century, Negro church s

had completely separated from the white Church. For this reason Afro-American churches are to a large degree centers of nationalism.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of leftist extremist groups strongly influenced by Maoists and Trotskyites stepped up their activities. Their adventurist line amounted to the necessity for an immediate armed conflict. They were opposed to the joint actions of white and black opponents of racial discrimination and were sharply critical of progressive black organizations and the Communist Party. In the late 1970s the leftist extremists lost much of their influence.

The National Baptist Convention of the USA was built on purely religious principles. This organization, one of the largest Negro religious organizations, numbering about 5 million, was closely linked to monopoly capital and government circles and had taken positions on the extreme right of the black American movement. Some influential organizations of black Americans which played an important part in the 1960s—the Congress of Racial Equality and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—have gradually withdrawn from the active struggle for the rights of black Americans. As far as the Southern Christian Leadership Council is concerned, it has played practically no role at all on a national level in the 1980s.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the influence of moderate reformist organizations has increased within the Negro movement. The NAACP has continued to remain one of the largest Negro organizations, its membership surpassing 450,000. The National Urban League, another of the older and more influential Afro-American organizations, has consolidated its positions. A new-type wide-profiled mass political organization of Afro-Americans grew out of the large-scale actions against racists in the 1970s. It originated in the summer of 1980; its final aim is the struggle for radical changes in the nation. Its immediate goal is the renaissance of a mass Negro movement relying on an alliance with other progressive forces.

Black Americans are ever more actively coming out for independent political action. This was shown by the creation, in late 1980, of a political party rallying Negroes. The party was formed by a whole string of Negro organizations looking for some alternative to the two-party system. They proposed creating a large-scale, anti-capitalistic, progressive polit-

ical organization which would act in behalf of black Americans.

These were the main Negro organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They spanned the whole political spectrum which the forces of reaction skillfully use in their interests to keep black freedom-fighters from forming a united front. Racial intolerance in the US frequently does not acknowledge the property factor. This is why many actions against racism are actively supported by black Americans of the most varied political beliefs and who are often situated on different steps of the social ladder in modern American society.

The Meredith case, which arose in 1962, belongs to actions of this kind. James Meredith, a former Air Force pilot, demanded that he be accepted at the University of Mississippi, where no black American before him had been enrolled. His case went through a string of lower courts all the way to the US Supreme Court. The Governor of Mississippi resorted to armed force to keep him from enrolling. After long delays, when racists who had dispensed with all restraint began mass assaults on federal marshals and National Guardsmen around the university, President Kennedy sent federal troops into Oxford, where the university is located. Only then was Meredith accepted. Twenty years later, in 1982, black students made up only 7 percent of the student body, a trifling percentage when you consider that 37 percent of Mississippi's population is black.

The heroic struggle of isolated individuals such as James Meredith has played its positive part in stimulating broad masses of opponents of racism. But the mass actions against racial discrimination by those who have been subjected to it have been particularly important.

In April and May of 1963, the attention of the entire country was focused on the city of Birmingham, that citadel of racism in the South. Thousands of black Americans, led by Martin Luther King, flocked to Birmingham's segregated restaurants and organized sit-ins at city institutions. They filled public places that were segregated, boycotted companies that practised hiring discrimination, and conducted protest demonstrations. The authorities threw armed police into the conflict. Afro-Americans were bowled over by powerful jets of water ejected by fire-fighters. The streets of the city were engulfed in dense clouds of tear gas. Enormous sheep-dogs were set on the demonstrators. Nevertheless, black

Americans won the day—the racists were forced to accept their demands.

The Birmingham events had a great motivating impact on the struggle against racism on a nationwide scale. They were especially significant in that they proved that it was possible to successfully oppose racism even in places where racist elements were particularly strong. Besides this, Birmingham also showed that only large-scale, well-organized actions by Blacks could lead to positive results in the struggle against racial discrimination.

The first successful large-scale actions inspired confidence in the effectiveness of these new forms of struggle. On August 23, 1963, 200,000 black and white opponents of racism from all over the country gathered in Washington at the Lincoln Memorial. At no time before or after has there been such a powerful and well-organized civil-rights demonstration.

"The protest marches and civil rights demonstrations spread so far and so fast after Birmingham that the summer of 1963 witnessed the birth of two journalistic phrases: 'the Negro Revolution' and 'the long, hot summer'".⁸¹

The authorities saw they would obviously have to make new concessions to the demands of those fighting against racism. Once again, another Civil Rights Act came out in 1964. The Act contained many good clauses prohibiting segregation in schools and public places and banning discrimination on the basis of skin color upon election to federal (but not local) office, etc. But as with all other civil rights laws, the serious defect in this one was that it had a declarative nature. An American historian wrote that, "the prohibition of discrimination" in the appropriate articles of the Act "was clear, and that had proved a certain deterrent, but enforcement machinery had not been provided".⁸² The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not and could not resolve the fundamental problems of the liberation movement of black Americans, which made new racial disturbances inevitable.

In July 1965, Blacks rose in the Watts ghetto of Los Angeles. For six days Los Angeles was a war zone. Machine-gun fire and grenade explosions rocked the ghetto. Thirty-six people were killed, 1,032 injured, and about 4,000 arrested. Some 977 buildings were burned and destroyed. The 40th armored division of the National Guard and the 49th infantry division, as well as massive numbers of police,

were used to quell the uprising. Such are the gloomy statistics. "This was perhaps the worst and most destructive riot in the United States since the Detroit riot of 1943."⁸³ (A mass action by black Americans in this most prominent US industrial center is meant here.)

Los Angeles was just the beginning. Armed action by Afro-Americans struck dozens of American cities all over the country from 1965 to 1967. Accounts of these actions were reminiscent of reports from a war zone. There were five large demonstrations by Blacks in 1965. They left 36 dead and 1,206 injured and 10,245 were arrested. In 1966 there were 21 similar incidents in which 11 people were killed, 520 injured, and 2,298 arrested. There were 75 protest demonstrations in Negro ghettos in 1967, the suppression of which left 83 dead, 1,897 wounded and 16,389 people were arrested.

Reactionary forces tried to explain the actions in Negro ghettos as "communist intrigues". But even representatives of US ruling circles were compelled to acknowledge that the most serious reasons, first of all of a socio-economic nature, were behind these actions.

Martin Luther King was murdered in April 1968. The US black populace answered this terrorist act by an explosion of indignation of unseen strength. Thousands of black Americans participated in these actions. Some 125 large demonstrations by Afro-Americans took place in April 1968. Forty-six people were killed in them, 3,500 wounded, and 20,000 arrested. The country was on the threshold of a real race war.

The stormy reaction by black Americans to King's murder was no accident: he held a special spot among leaders of the Afro-American movement. King came from the generation of Americans whose views were formed in the years following World War II. Not only had the armed forces of Nazi Germany and its allies been wiped out on the battlefields of the world war, but a crushing blow had also been dealt to the misanthropic ideology of fascism which based itself on the most deeply ingrained racism.

Afro-Americans who were actively involved in the Second World War expected that at last promises by the nation's ruling circles on eliminating racial discrimination would be fulfilled in the post-war years. This did not happen, however. The cold war buried the hopes for improving the status of the broad working masses of Afro-Americans.

US imperialist circles opened a two-front cold war after the end of World War II. An external front was aimed at socialist countries and all progressive forces. Cold war entrenchments crossed even the United States itself: a hail of repressions came down on US progressive forces, including activists in the Afro-American movement.

The internal reaction which accompanied the cold war urgently dictated the necessity of finding new ways of fighting for civil rights and against racism and all its manifestations in the economic, social, and political spheres of American society. This was the complex setting for the beginning of the socio-political activities of King. The outstanding leader of the US Negro people was born into the family of a pastor on January 15, 1929 in the city of Atlanta, Georgia. He spent his childhood there, in one of the parklands for American racism. King was later to recall that even in early childhood he ran awry of the most cruel racial discrimination. At the age of five he well knew what the insurmountable racial barrier was in the American South.

He was the initiator and leader of mass nonviolent actions by black and white opponents of racism. But King was in no way the "apostle of nonviolence" as those opposed to mass revolutionary actions by black Americans try to present him. They would like to squeeze the powerful movement against racism into the Procrustean bed of reforms and nonviolent actions.

In April 1963, in a letter from Birmingham City Jail, King, without refuting his views on the problem of nonviolent resistance, made himself quite clear on the necessity for firm actions in the fight for the rights of Blacks: "History," he wrote, "is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily."⁸⁴ Eloquent evidence that King was not bound by the nonviolence dogma is the fact that he did much so that the hundredth anniversary of slavery's abolition would become a genuine review of forces fighting for the abolition of racial discrimination. And he could say with complete justification that in 1963 the Afro-American movement had turned into a "hammer of Civil Rights" and that "more than 1,000 American cities and towns were shaken by street demonstrations, and more than 20,000 nonviolent resisters went to jail."⁸⁵ It is also well known that in the final period of his life, King became a confirmed opponent of the war in Viet-

nam. And with his inherent energy, he organized numerous mass actions against American aggression in that country.

And lastly, one of the most convincing arguments that King had not gotten locked into nonviolence was his attitude toward the problem of restructuring American society. He bluntly stated that a society which begets beggars should be rebuilt, and that a nation that spends more on war than on social programs is heading for spiritual death. And everyone knows that the "rebuilding" of society is a process accompanied by actions in no way fitting into the framework of "nonviolence". It is significant that King often came back to the question that only an alliance by white and black working people can provide a radical resolution of all of Afro-Americans' problems.

King was a new type of leader. He fought for the rights of his people not in the quiet of his office, nor from the pulpit or the courtroom. The street was the principal scene for his struggle. He directly guided the mass actions of opponents of racism. He had to have exceptional personal courage to do this. There has always been the real threat of physical violence to black American leaders in the US. Racists tried to lynch Frederick Douglass, for instance. At the age of 83, W.E.B. DuBois was subjected to severe judicial prosecution. Racists spoiled performances by the well-known Negro singer Paul Robeson and tried to lynch him.

But more tribulations fell to King's lot than to all three of those black leaders together. Death dogged him literally every single day. A bomb was tossed at his house in 1956. Another one in 1957. He was knifed in the chest in 1958. In 1964, the cottage where he was staying one night was riddled by sub-machine-gun fire. During a mass demonstration of black Americans in Chicago, local racists made an armed assault on the peaceful demonstration. King, marching at the head of the column, was knocked down by a brick thrown at his head. A knife thrown at him seriously wounded a black youth marching next to him.

American reactionaries are avenging King even after his death. King's mother was killed in the summer of 1974. The killing was just another act of vandalism by the racists: an old woman was killed by a pistol shot during church service.

King's ability to correctly express what millions of Blacks were already aware of played an important role in his becoming a leader on a national scale. King understood and evaluated the specifics of the Afro-American movement

better than any other leader. He was an outstanding strategist of this movement and a skilled tactician.

Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, and Martin Luther King are the three most important figures in the Negro liberation movement. They each had different convictions, were active in different periods, understood the aims and tasks of the black American movement differently, and took different paths to the common goal—the liberation of their people from slavery and racial discrimination. But there was one thing in common that united these outstanding black leaders: all three became leaders of the black movement on a national level.

It was King's honor to lead the movement during its unprecedented rise. This determined to a significant degree the outstanding place in the movement of Afro-Americans for their rights that history had set aside for Martin Luther King. This is why black Americans reacted to King's murder in ways not seen before in America's history.

Henry Winston, Angela Davis, Martin Luther King—the heroic struggle of Blacks for their freedom has given birth to many glorious names. And one of the most honored spots must go to the great artist and fearless fighter against racial discrimination, a man who fought for peace and friendship between peoples and was a great friend of the Soviet Union—Paul Robeson.

For many years after World War II the American public knew little about this man whose great talent gave glory to the United States in many countries abroad. At long last, in the summer of 1975, a one-hour program was shown on American television dedicated to the life and activities of Paul Robeson. American TV viewers learned that the seriously ill Robeson had been at peace for many years now living with his sister in the city of Philadelphia.

Robeson was stripped of his right to perform during the McCarthy period right after World War II. Racists tried to lynch him. But they were unable to intimidate Robeson and force him to keep quiet. They were likewise unable to forsake his name to oblivion.

Democrats and Republicans have turned the helm of power over to one another several times in the post-war period, but the tactics of the ruling circles on the race relations question have not changed. Under pressure from the powerful movement of Afro-Americans, legislative, executive, and judicial authorities have made certain concessions to Blacks

and passed acts which have led to some restraining of racial discrimination. However, the ruling circles have thought of suppressing the movement by force. Murders, arrests, beatings, and other outrages upon participants in the mass actions by black Americans have become a common occurrence.

The Ku Klux Klan sharply stepped up its terrorist activities after the end of World War II. It is difficult to believe that such barbarous actions as this ominous organization engages in are possible in a civilized country in our times.

The advent of the Reagan administration to power has stimulated activity of this ominous organization. It was no accident that the Ku Klux Klan officially supported the Republican Presidential candidate in the 1980 election. Once in power, Reagan fully repaid the political dividends the Klan thugs had given him.

Reagan's racist policies have created conditions throughout the country for uniting numerous local chapters of the Klan. This unification was completed at the end of 1982. The Ku Klux Klan Confederation resolved to hold an open march through the center of the US capital. First the Klansmen held a trial run in a Washington suburb, then, on Saturday, November 27, 1982, they planned a march from Capitol Hill down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. They decided to repeat exactly the route of their predecessors who had marched through Washington in 1925. As one of the Klan leaders stated, they wanted to demonstrate their desire for closer ties with legislators and the federal government. Two Justices of the US Supreme Court once belonged to the Ku Klux Klan. A future US President, Harry Truman, joined the organization in 1922.

A lot has changed since 1925, when the Ku Klux Klan organized its open march in the US capital. This time, thousands of black and white opponents of racism gathered for a counter-demonstration. Many came to the capital from far corners of the country. Thousands of fighters against racism met the Klansmen with slogans like "Down with the Ku Klux Klan!" and "We've Had Enough! We Won't Be Intimidated!" To avoid trouble, police advised the racists to cancel their march down Pennsylvania Avenue and go instead by bus to the White House. That is what they did. Incensed Washingtonians met the racists in Lafayette Square, across from the White House. There, American "democracy" went into action. The police encircled the Klansmen and

went after the opponents of the racists with nightsticks and tear gas.

The Ku Klux Klan is able to exist and carry out its pogrom activities with impunity only at the connivance of the authorities. This terrorist organization is assisted in the most varied forms. The truth about its bloody activities is concealed, for example. For some 60 years the American public knew practically nothing of the terrible tragedy that took place on May 31, 1921, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. No fewer than 270 Blacks were killed there in a 24-hour pogrom. A district where Blacks lived was plundered and turned to ruins and ashes.

What do US ruling circles think about the facts of terror against Afro-Americans? There is no shortage of virulent tirades against extremes in racial conflicts. One frequently hears of the need to prosecute those guilty of breaking the country's laws. But it seems proper to ask why so little is being done for the practical resolution of the most severe problem of race relations in the US. And if definite measures are being taken in this direction, why then no tangible results are coming of them? One can only say to this that both parties of monopoly capital, the Democratic and the Republican, do not wish to take positions that would be in the interests of the millions of Blacks living in the US. They do not take such positions because the country's monopolistic circles, regardless of what party they belong to, are making many billions of profits from the super-exploitation of Afro-American working people.

Neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party favor the abolition of racial discrimination. Their position on the issue is determined by the fact that the split of the working people along a racial principle is one of the necessary conditions for the existence of US monopoly capital. One can find only one example in US history when a political party, from the moment of its appearance and all through its activities, has consistently supported the vital rights of Afro-Americans. That example is the party of the American Communists.

It is the only party that approaches scientifically the problem of black Americans. The American Communists take into account all the most important aspects of the problem of Blacks in the USA: racial and class. The Communists bear in mind the entire variety of questions connected to the problem of Afro-Americans: the role of farmers, the black

bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, questions of Afro-American nationalism, and the international aspect of the problem of black Americans. In the program documents of the Communist Party USA it is stressed that "the struggle for Black liberation in the United States is today the central, most crucial issue before the entire working class and its allies".⁸⁶

The Communist Party notes that a cardinal solution of the problem of black Americans is possible only under socialism. In this context the Communists consider it necessary to conduct a parallel struggle for reforms, for improving the status of the black people, for revolutionary transformations, for the final goal. The Communists have been devoting great attention at all stages of the black movement to the matter of allies of Afro-Americans in the struggle against racism as the most important and crucial condition for a successful fight against monopoly capital, the chief enemy of all working masses of the country. The Communist Party points out that, without white allies, Blacks will be unable to win freedom. The main ally of black Americans is the white working class, which has common class interests with black laborers. This alliance is needed in no less a degree by the white working class.

The black movement is gradually arming itself with a number of Communist Party positions on the Negro question. This is the most cogent evidence that the policies of the Communists are in accord with the vital interests of the black people.

When set against the decisive, purposeful struggle of the Communists for the rights of Blacks, the activities of the two main American bourgeois parties on the question of resolving the race relations problem look particularly unconvincing.

Nearly forty years have passed since World War II ended. These were years when black Americans carried on the struggle for eliminating the system of racial intolerance. Millions of black and white opponents of racism took part in mass actions demanding that racial segregation and discrimination be abolished. These efforts by opponents of racism have had their positive results: the crudest and most demeaning forms of racial segregation were abolished. It would not be right to deny the importance of the results achieved in the struggle against racism. Numerous laws protecting civil rights were passed after World War II. They have created a legal basis for Blacks' further fight against

racism. They have furthered the growth of self-awareness in Afro-Americans and added to the confidence they feel in their strength.

At the same time, these accomplishments in the legal regulation of the problem of US Blacks should not be overestimated. The entire history of race relations in the US shows that a huge distance separates legislative acts and their enactment in everyday life. Contemporary American reality cogently confirms the correctness of a classic appraisal of Lenin's: "Capitalism has no 'room' for other than legal emancipation, and even the latter it curtails in every possible way."⁸⁷

In recent years, the liberation movement of black Americans has entered a new phase, with the struggle for socio-economic demands moving into the foreground. This phase of the struggle has tremendous importance, since Blacks continue to remain pariahs in American society. The coming social explosions frighten reactionary America. And there are the most serious reasons for such apprehensions.

The difficult material circumstances of Afro-Americans, the growing solidarity of black and white opponents of racial intolerance, the mature self-awareness of Afro-Americans which is strengthening their confidence in their power, the inability and, to a significant degree, lack of desire by the nation's ruling circles to fundamentally resolve the race relations problem—all of this makes the growing fight by all opponents of racism for the elimination of this shameful phenomenon of American life inevitable.

CONCLUSION

The black people have made a large contribution to the creation and development of the United States of America. The struggle by the Afro-Americans against slavery and racial discrimination has written many glorious pages in the history of the democratic movement and the formation of revolutionary traditions of the American people. In this regard, the demands of Afro-Americans are natural: "America is our home and we want to be full and equal masters in our home, and not poor relatives."

The cruelest discrimination against Blacks remains the most complex socio-economic, political, and legal problem of the United States. Even today one can repeat the words of Lenin: "Shame on America for the plight of the Negroes!"¹

The struggle of black Americans for their rights, for the democratization of the nation's domestic policies, and against its aggressive foreign policies is all an integral part of the movement for creating an anti-monopolistic front in the USA. Only by uniting all anti-monopolistic forces can the problems touching on the vital interests of American working people be solved without regard to skin color. The history of the USA gives convincing proof of the justness of the Marxist truth that the revolutions are the locomotives of history. During its revolutionary upsurge, the black movement developed at a wild rate and grew into an armed fight with the forces of reaction. This fight had its positive results. Black Americans made significant progress in solving problems vitally important to them. There is a characteristic pattern in the history of the US black people: Afro-Americans' fundamental problems have been resolved only in the course of revolutionary struggle, and not by reform.

In fact, the first American revolution led to slavery's abolition in the northern states. The second American revolution was marked by the abolition of slavery on a

nationwide scale. The Black Revolution, as the rapid rise of the Afro-American movement in the 1960s is called in the US, has led to the elimination of the more crude forms of racial discrimination. It is consistent to ask, why is the Negro problem so incredibly tenacious; why, even today, are racial prejudices still so strong in the US?

Some bourgeois authors see the reasons for this phenomenon being that the US is the only industrially developed capitalist power with such a large black minority. They believe this means the country's race relations problems are not only entirely natural, but are even justified. Often the crux of the problem is reduced to a subjective factor. It is claimed that black Americans have a whole range of negative characteristics keeping Whites from maintaining normal relations with them. Sometimes they reduce the essence of the problem to a racist interpretation alone. It is stated that white Americans are too infected with racism to be able to reconcile themselves to treating Blacks as people equal to themselves.

Obviously, none of these interpretations explains the essence of the problem. We believe the historical factor plays an important role: all through American history, Blacks have been treated as second-rate people. These deeply rooted racist traditions affect a certain portion of the white populace even today. The US reactionary circles continue effectively exploiting these traditions, splitting American working people along the racial and national principle. Modern American reality gives new confirmations to Lenin's well-known thesis that the American bourgeoisie is "unequalled anywhere in the world in the art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers".²

And, of course, the purely economic factor is also of great importance. The super-exploitation of Blacks brings in many billions of super-profits for monopoly capital. These profits can be maintained only by widely spreading racist sentiments among white working people. This is why monopoly capital supports and cultivates racism in every conceivable manner.

The ever strengthening united front of white and black working people in the struggle against all manifestations of racism is the guarantee of future successes in the resolution of the race relations problem. The community of class interests of white and black working people is forcing its way through the cluster of racial prejudices artificially cultivated by reactionaries.

Only the combined efforts of all Americans regardless of

skin color ensured victory for the insurgent colonies and the creation of the USA, which was an important stage on the black people's road to liberation. Only a united front of white and black working people created all the necessary prerequisites for the defeat of the rebel slave owners in the Civil War and for the abolition of slavery.

The Reconstruction period offers important historical lessons. While Blacks and their radical Republican allies were united in the southern states, Afro-Americans made great progress in the fight for the resolution of all their problems in the sphere of civil rights, economics, and public education. Reactionary forces succeeded in undoing the united front of Blacks and Whites, which was the prologue to the collapse of the Reconstruction governments and the re-establishment of the power of the former slave owners in all the southern states.

The history of black Americans' movement offers other instructive lessons, as well. The bourgeoisie, the capitalist circles cannot be genuine, consistent allies of Blacks in the struggle for freedom. One of the most convincing proofs of this is the North bourgeoisie's betrayal of their black Civil War allies during Reconstruction.

The international aspect of the Afro-American problem acquired importance in the period following the end of World War II. The sympathies and support of the progressive world public have always been on the side of the US black people fighting against slavery and racial discrimination. If you take Russia, the best representatives of its progressive public have also always been on the side of the US black people in their struggle against slavery and racial discrimination. Alexander Radishchev, the Russian revolutionary thinker and writer, and Nikolai Novikov, the well-known Russian enlightener, both spoke out as firmly as possible against racism in America during the War for Independence and the period when the independent North American nation was being formed. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, the Russian Revolutionary Democrat, raised his voice in defense of the black slaves during the US Civil War. Alexander Herzen, the Russian revolutionary, philosopher, writer, and publicist, was sharply critical of the slavery of black Americans. The founder of the Communist Party and the world's first socialist state, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, gave a profound and comprehensive analysis of the US Negro problem in his books and articles. The Soviet writer Maxim

Gorky and the outstanding poet Vladimir Mayakovsky sharply criticized American racism.

A.V. Yefimov, the founder of American studies in the Soviet Union, gave great attention to analyzing the historical aspects of the problem of black Americans. A school of historians came together in the USSR after World War II and has fruitfully studied the history and contemporary status of black Americans.

Anti-imperialist national liberation revolutions by colonial and dependent peoples have led to the downfall of the colonial system of imperialism. The political map of the world has changed beyond recognition. Over 100 new independent countries have appeared on it since the end of World War II. The peoples of young sovereign countries are heartily sympathetic to forces fighting against racial discrimination in the US and offer them all possible aid. They regard this struggle as an important integral part of the world movement in defense of equal rights and opportunities for all peoples regardless of race or creed.

The world's progressive forces are rendering moral and political support to the struggle for equal rights for black Americans. Here is where the international nature of the problem of Afro-Americans comes in.

History and the experience of the contemporary fight of Afro-Americans teaches that only white workers, farmers, and the working intelligentsia can be Blacks' true allies. It is not racial, but class relations which are the chief watershed in the struggle by black Americans for their rights. As the Afro-American movement shows, this truth is successfully making its way out: ordinary participants in the Afro-American movement and many of its leaders are ever more actively favoring the establishment of an effective alliance between all the nation's progressive forces. White Americans, opponents of racial discrimination, are likewise ever more actively favoring the creation of a united front of white and black working people with an anti-monopolistic slant. Only on this road can new successes be achieved in resolving the problems of race relations in the United States of America.

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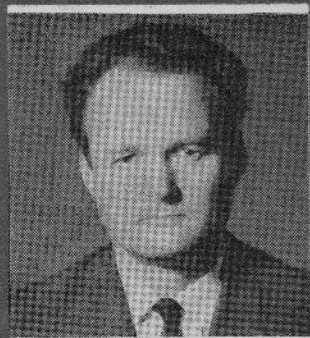
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